

FEBRUARY

ANIME • MANGA • SFX • JAPANESE POP CULTURE

11



THE  
SECRET OF  
BLUE WATER

KABUTO

COBRA

CYGUARD



EXCLUSIVE TO AFX  
CENTRE SPREAD  
POSTER BY  
KOICHI  
OHATA



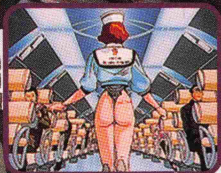
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# ARMITAGE II

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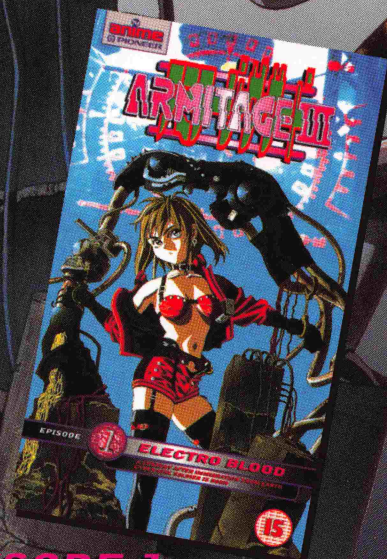
**THE PLACE: MARS 2179**  
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11

# アニメFX AnimeFX

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*This is the Chinese character 'wan', meaning 'ending'; the Japanese reading is 'kan', and when you see it, it means you've reached the end of an article or instalment!*

## OTAKU VOCABULARY

You'll find some Japanese terms crop up again and again. Here are a few definitions:

<b>ANIME</b>	Japanese animation
<b>CHARA</b>	Character
<b>KAWAII</b>	Cute
<b>MANGA</b>	Japanese Comics
<b>MECHA</b>	Mechanical object, ie robot, vehicle, weapon, etc.
<b>OTAKU</b>	Anime fanboy/girl
<b>OVA/OAV</b>	Original Video Animation, anime made for video
<b>SEIYUU</b>	Anime voice actor

## THE INTERNATIONAL ANIME & MANGA MAGAZINE

### KONNICHIWA!

We've got a very exciting extra for you this month.

As you've already seen from our cover, we have been given a special present - the right to print a new piece of original artwork from CYBERNETICS GUARDIAN by director Koichi Ohata. Our centrefold feature celebrates the US release of CYGUARD, and Ohata-sensei wanted to help us celebrate. Even though he's very busy working on M.D. GEIST 2 right now, he made time in his crowded schedule to produce this stunning image especially for ANIME FX. CYGUARD was his directorial debut, and going back to the work to produce this picture recalled very happy memories for him.

We know that you'll enjoy it as much as we do, so we've put it on the centre pages, with no type to get in the way; if you want to take it out and pin it on your wall, the rest of the magazine won't be spoiled. A very big thank you to Ohata-sensei from all of us at AFX! We really appreciate his kindness in thinking of us at such a very busy time and giving us such an amazing picture. We also have an exclusive and right up-to-date interview with him, given just before Christmas while he was working on our centrefold picture, and we'd like to say thank you to the guys at Central Park Media for co-ordinating the interview and getting the artwork safely to us.

Also in this issue, news and features on the latest UK, US and Japanese releases, a look at the new wave of Hong Kong comics, some advice for students of anime and manga, plus all our usual goodies. So what are you waiting for? Read on!

Yours animatedly,

Helen McCarthy  
Editor



**NOTE: Change of Plan!**  
 Although we said that the third part of Jolyon Yates' **COMPLEAT ULTRAMAN** series would be in this issue, it will in fact continue in **AnimeFX #13**

Right: **COBRA Ne-Chan** © Steve Kyte

Cover: **CYGUARD: CYBERNETICS GUARDIAN**. Artwork by Steve Kyte based on official line artwork  
**CYGUARD** © Soshin Picture, AIC, CPM

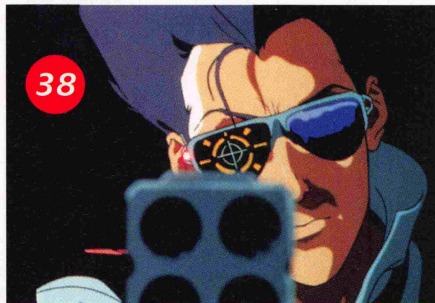
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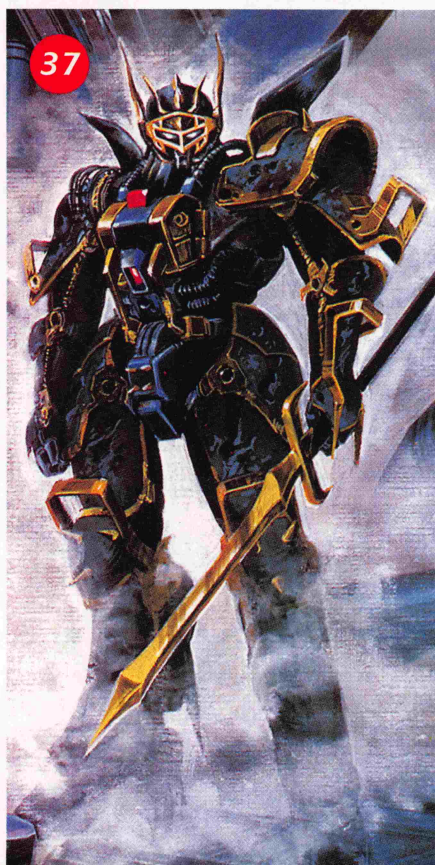
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# newscan

## EUROPE

### KISEKI ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR 96

In response to the changes in the anime market over the last twelve months, and to the many letters and suggestions they've received from anime fans, Kiseki have some new initiatives for the new year. Reflecting the importance the company places on fan opinion and feedback, Peter Cullen, editor of the popular fanzine RED LEOPARD, has been appointed to take over production of the Kiseki Club news-sheet and zine. He plans to produce regular information for Club members and to make the Club Kiseki's finger on the pulse of fan thinking. And because the overwhelming success of Manga Video's initiative in producing collectable series at a low price point indicates that this is what anime fans want, Kiseki are releasing their entire back catalogue at £5.99 over the next year. New titles will continue to appear every month at the more usual price of £9.99 and upwards, but this will give anyone who's missed out on series like ROBOTECH and GUN-



GOSHOGUN: TIME ETRANGER



REI REI

BUSTER, or movies like PEEK THE BABY WHALE and MACROSS DO YOU REMEMBER LOVE? an opportunity to fill the gaps in their collection at a very reasonable price. The company also plans to launch into CDV in the spring, although details have yet to be announced. New titles will include DIGITAL DEVIL, REI REI and the already-infamous UROT-SUKIDOJI/ OVERFIEND 4, which is likely to be much shorter when the BBFC have finished with it.

### EAST2WEST GOES LIVE!

Following up their January 29th release of John Woo's early work HEROES SHED NO TEARS, East2West have two more powerful Hong Kong battlefests in February. MY FATHER IS A HERO stars Jet Li as an undercover agent pursued by both the police and the mob; when his small son is kidnapped he takes an epic revenge. Chow Yun Fat reprises one of his most popular roles in RETURN OF THE GOD OF GAMBLERS, which outgrossed SPEED to claim its place as the #1 box office movie in Hong Kong. The label is considering plans for a major competition to win a trip to Hong Kong, though they can't promise you won't be caught in a hail of bullets en route! On the anime side, BABEL II Vol 2, announced last year, was released on 22nd January.

### MANGA LATEST

The long awaited video launch of GHOST IN THE SHELL has been announced for April 8th 1996; so if you've missed the cinema screenings you will be able to see it on the small screen soon. More immediate releases from Manga are the first episode of hit OAV series GIANT ROBO (see feature in AFX #10), GOKU: MIDNIGHT EYE, another title from Buichi Terasawa, the first episode of the adventure of a group of New York cops in MAD BULL, and mystifying 1985 OAV GOSHOGUN: TIME ETRANGER, based on the 1981 TV series GOSHOGUN. No new graphic novels are planned for February.

### ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN CONNECTION FRONT

No new releases have been announced by Western Connection for the first quarter of 1996. A number of titles were linked with the company last winter but there are no firm plans at present.

### HOW TO ART

A new book due from Titan in March should help those wanting to extend their artwork skills. The *Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy Art Techniques* claims to be "the first comprehensive A-Z guide" and includes a gallery of finished works by "today's most innovative



MAD BULL 34



GOKU: MIDNIGHT EYE

and renowned fantasy artists" with reference to anime and manga amid all the Western material. By SF writer John Grant and 2000AD artist Ron Tiner, the book has 179 pages, is illustrated in full colour throughout and will set you back £16.99, or about the price of half a dozen tubes of gouache or a good quality A2 layout pad. Review to follow.

### PIGS OVER POLAND

Hayao Miyazaki's PORCO ROSSO was screened in Poland, in a Polish dub which was reportedly excellent, on the evening of 5th December. The nearest we've come to a Studio Ghibli production on TV since 1991 was the short clip from Isao Takahata's HEISEI TANUKI GASEN PONPOKO screened on Sunday 10th December in a Granada news programme. Just what do we have to do to get these fabulous films shown to mass audiences in Britain?



PORCO ROSSO

# newscan

## TV AND VIDEO IN FRANCE

TMC, in association with Recre Kids, is screening **MARC ET MARIE**, a 1978 series by Nippon Animation originally titled **HAIKARA-SAN GA TORU** which tells the story of a young girl engaged to a soldier she has never seen. The original had 42 episodes and the dub is screened on Sunday mornings. **TRAPP IKKA MONOGATARI**, the anime version of **THE SOUND OF MUSIC**, is another Nippon Animation series, made in 1991, onscreen on Wednesdays at 8 a.m. Meanwhile, Miyazaki fans have had a chance to see the two films of **FIFI BRINDACIER** (Astrid Lindgren's **PIPPY LONGSTOCKING**) on Canal J over the holidays; Miyazaki-sensei did preparatory work and some directing on the films and 21-episode TV series in the 1970s.

On video, Kaze Animation have announced that **ARMITAGE III**, **KISHIN HEIDAN** and **YUUGEN KAISHA** will be among their 1996 releases. Shuriken Video plans include films from the **RANMA 1/2** and **SAINT SEIYA** stable, plus a six-hour compilation version of scenes from the first 100 episodes of the **DRAGONBALL Z** TV series. Tonkam offer **YU YU HAKUSHO** the movie and **VIDEO GIRL AI**, the manga version of which has been a huge success for them. AK Video, already committed to the **COBRA** TV series, will also offer Tezuka Pro's **BLACK-JACK** OAVs and **TAIHO SHICHAUZO** in subtitled format. Newcomers Dragon Video, launched by games shop Dragon Games, have started off with two dubbed titles, **ICZELION** and **MIGHTY SPACE MINERS**. On the erotic front, **EVA** (Erotic Video Animation) and Katsumi Video continue to teach you the French you didn't learn in school with a new title list which will, we are told, include a homo-erotic title.

## CATALAN EXTRAS

Anyone who has been on holiday in the beautiful Catalan region of Spain will tell you it's unlike any other part of the country; it has its own history, its own traditions, even its own language. And its own version of **DRAGONBALL**. Barcelona's TV channel Antena 3 provides exclusively Catalan language programming, all day, every day, and it shows more anime than any other Spanish channel. Because its programmes are shown exclusively in the Catalan territory, it shows Toriyama's masterpiece uncensored and with its original titles, while the rest of Spain makes do with the edited version provided by AB Productions.



**MIGHTY SPACE MINERS** from Dragon Video in France

notes' to VHP at PO Box 5252, Vernon Hills, IL 60016, USA. Meanwhile **ANIMECO** is Hawaii's first anime magazine and also functions as the official magazine of the Japanese Animation Society of Hawaii. It's a quarterly, costs \$2.95, and you can get more information from **Limelight** at 1513 Young St, Suite 202, Honolulu, HI 96826, USA, email [whols@aloha.net](mailto:whols@aloha.net).

## AM WORKS CORRECTION

Thanks to Dean Hsieh of AMW for letting us know that the company has no connection with **Danger Girls**, which is being put out by Animagic.

## NEW AMERICAN MANGA LAUNCH

American writer-publisher Steve Stern and artist Joel Orbeta are launching two new 'crossover' comics which they say "combine elements of manga and anime with US superhero sensibilities". **MANGA ZEN** and **SHYGIRL** are due out from Zen Comics Publishing any day now. Watch for them in your local comic shop; if they don't get copies in, they can order for you via **Advance Comics** or **Previews**.

Below: **SHYGIRL**. New American pseudomanga from Zen Comics

## USA

### STREAMLINE PICTURES MODELWORKS LATEST

Streamline have called on the skills of sfx film-maker Wyatt Weed, noted for his work on **GUYVER: DARK HERO**, for their latest cold-cast resin anime kit, a 1/6 scale model of winged anithero **GUY**, based on the work of Yori-hisa Uchida. With a suggested list price of \$99.95, it can be found in better hobby stores in the USA, or call Streamline to order direct on (001) 310 998 0700. Another new Modelworks release is the first in a series based on classic covers from the magazine **HEAVY METAL**. Terry Lattimer interprets Oscar Chichoni's image of a female welder at work on a muscular android. Priced at \$149.95, available as above.

### NEW US ANIME MAGAZINES

Thanks to Fred Patten for news of two new zines from the USA. **ANIME SQUARED** is a semiprozine edited by the Greater Chicago Megazine group and published by Village Hall Productions; an issue costs \$2.50, it's bimonthly and you can get details or send 'correspondence, submissions, artwork, chocolate, contest answers and other love



# newscan

## SAILOR SWITCH

The running order for the American TV version of SAILOR MOON, which followed the original Japanese series for the first 40 episodes, made a number of giant leaps - back to #54, then straight to #65, then back to #41 and straight through to #53. This was apparently on the instructions of DIC to the TV companies, but no explanation has so far been offered. (Many thanks to the C/FO Bulletin for this information.)



## JAPAN

### 'NEW' GUNDAM RETURNS TO ITS ROOTS

Yes, another Gundam extravaganza, 13 episodes starting 25th January from Bandai Visual with the release of episodes 1 and 2 on one tape. GUNDAM; 8TH MOBILE SUIT PLATOON takes us back to the beginning of the Gundam saga, those early days when Char Aznable, Amuro Ray & Co. were duking it out in battle and trying to come to terms with being NewTypes. Shiro has been born and bred on a colony in space, but he wants to join a Terran mobile suit platoon. Then, just like Amuro, he gets caught up in a Zion attack. There's no indication that any of the established characters will make a guest appearance but those addicted to tormented Aryan antiheroes are already on the lookout for the Char clone.

### CAPTAIN TSUBASA - STILL KICKING!

The enduring popularity of older shows is showcased with another 45-minute OAV offering. The exploits of Japan's young soccer players have been popular on TV and in manga form for years - in fact, the manga version of CAPTAIN TSUBASA is still running in



Shueisha's SHONEN JUMP. Now a new OAV (in fact, the video release of a 1991 film which passed completely unnoticed at the time!) gives aficionados more adventures of the Captain and his team-mates in the Japan Youth Team as they face the Dutch national youth side. 45 minutes of fousls, footballing action and drama.

### GEGEGE NO KITARO BLASTS FROM THE PAST

Another golden oldie, this renowned 1960s manga from one-armed artist Shigeru Mizuki, which had a black-and-white anime version televised in 1969, and a live action incarnation followed by more anime, is returning to Fuji TV this month. Directed by Daisuke Nishio of DRAGONBALL movie fame, it is rumoured to feature many complete novices among the seiyuu, since many of the original actors are now too old to reprise their former roles. Kitaro is a schoolboy with an unusual family (Dad is a spirit incarnated in an eyeball which wanders alarmingly), unusual friends (Catgirl, Ratman, Piece of Paper and other traditional Japanese ghoulies), unusual powers

(his hair can spear you like porcupine spines, he wears guided-missile wooden sandals, and you don't want to know about his jacket ...) but a very normal inclination to help his friends and those in trouble. If this is half as good as the earlier series it'll be unmissable. Not to mention funny.

### TENCHI MUYO THE MOVIE

The TV series may have come to an end with episode 26, but the movie promises real excitement as Tenchi vanishes! TENCHI MUYO: IN LOVE! is directed by Hiroshi Negishi of KO CENTURY BEAST WARRIORS fame and co-written by Negishi and the wildly talented Ryohei Tsukimura. Let's say BACK TO THE FUTURE, because that's exactly where Tenchi doesn't want to go when he is whisked back 26 years and creates a love triangle with devastating effects. If Achika marries him instead of her destined beau, the results will be disastrous for Tenchi's whole family, so the rest of the gang have to timetrek back to save the universe - and save our hapless hero from himself, and Achika.



### SONODA SWEETIES

Kenichi Sonoda's newest chara design excursion is coming in OAV form from Nippon Columbia in April. IDOL FIGHT SWEETPIE II is based on a computer game - one of those where the main objective is to get the cute girls to take their clothes off - but apparently has plenty of fight action added. More info and pix next issue.

### THE MAZE OF THE BOOK

Satoru Akahori's novel MAZE:EXPLODING DIMENSION is now a radio drama, and the OAV version is to follow this summer. heroine Maze is played by Kotono Mitsuishi. By day she's a normal girl, but at night she turns into a brash young male version of herself. Maze gets involved with the Jaina Organisation, a group dedicated to the subjugation of the entire world. Jaina have organised a coup d'etat in the Vartonian Empire and princess Mill has lost her home and rank, but she doesn't care - she just wants to get her hands on Maze's body, and she isn't too fussed about which form it's in at the time. Sakura Akashita provides Mill's voice. Other participants in this saga of magic, mecha and mirth are Astar, a sword-swinging macho type who guards the supermecha Devil Machine and has the hots for the daytime version of Maze; his fellow-Guardian Solude, a nasty bitch with no interest in men; and Gorgeous, a bishonen baddie who absolutely lives up to his name. Sounds like it could be fun...

### HUMMINGBIRDS FLY AGAIN

A public apology in NewType for the lateness of the final part of this OAV miniseries - by three months - only whetted fans' appetites. HUMMINGBIRDS 95: TO THE PLACE OF DREAMS is finally out in Japan and the girls behind the five singing fighter pilots take a final bow in the live-action concert video HUMMINGBIRDS FINAL CONCERT. As NewType puts it, this is "a golden handshake for the pretty-girl anime that kicked off the 90s voice actress boom!" The five girls haven't done badly out of the experience; Sakiko Tamagawa and Akie Kusachi already had acting careers well established, but Kotono Mitsuishi went on to fame and fortune as the most loved crybaby since Lucille Ball, SAILOR MOON; Heikiru Shiina (of PLASTIC LITTLE) is developing her idol-singing career further and Yuri Amano is back in the TYLER team as Yuriko Star.



Above left: Sonoda's SWEETPIE  
Left: Gegege no Kitaro

# newscan

## NINJA

If the style looks familiar, think LAMUNE & 40 DX - they share the same chara designer. The two-part OAV coming from Youmex in March transplants the ninja myths ( a 20th century reading of Edo period ideals) to a fantasy realm. Byakuro, the Kingdom of Stealth, is a peaceable place overwhelmed by hostile forces from the Empire of Kavus. Ten years on, the last princess of Byakuro comes out of hiding in the mountains to reclaim her throne with the help of a strange band of warriors. Princess Yume is protected by Kaworu, son of Yukinobu, the minister who saved the child all those years ago. He considers it his duty to carry on his father's work of defending the Princess, but often cramps her style. 15-year-old Potchi is the youngest of the team and an accomplished swordsman, but not much trouble since he's an obliging lad. 16-year-old Sakura is skilled in all the Ninja arts and treats Potchi like a brother, but she has a major crush on Kaworu. So does Matsuri, a hot-headed martial artist who takes great pride in not needing to resort to weapons; which girl will win? Hayashi is that odd creature, a pacifist ninja; but just the same, he likes to be prepared for any eventuality and carries a number of bombs and grenades about his person at all times. Led by Kaworu, this odd little

band plans to take on the might of the Kavus empire and restore their Princess to her rightful place. Watch for it!

## GET SERIOUS

For those whose world doesn't begin and end with cute girls in short skirts, the TV anime special of THE SILENT SERVICE is now available on video. Based on the hugely successful manga still running in Comic Morning, this tense, gripping tale of a Japanese submarine commander who decides that not only can he say no, but he can make the rest of the world sit up and listen, the video is directed by Ryosuke Takahashi of COCKPIT and VOTOMS fame and features voice work from Akio and Chikao Otsuka. The TV series will start in the spring. Questions were asked about the manga in the Diet (the Japanese Parliament) and it's been read and debated by everyone from students to salarymen; it should be worth watching.

Below: NINJA  
-the characters are:  
Top: KAWORU  
Middle: Left HAYASHI, Centre  
PRINCESS YUME, Right MATSURI  
Bottom: Left POTCHI, Right SAKURA



Above: THE SILENT SERVICE

## ANIME OF THE BOOK

To celebrate the centenary of the birth of great Japanese author Kenji Miyazawa, three production houses have got together to make anime of three of his stories. Magic Bus, Animal House and Triangle Staff will premiere their trilogy in the author's home prefecture of Iwate during the Miyazawa Centenary Festival to be held this summer. FUR OF THE FROZEN RIVER RAT features a rich man taking a train journey from the town of Ihatov to the Bering Straits. He boasts to his fellow-travellers about his coat, made from the pelts of rats caught on the frozen river, but maybe boasting isn't always a good idea. CAT OFFICE is the story of four felines who work as clerks in an underground station; the plot opens with a meeting between them and their boss. Perhaps the most typically fantastical of the stories, STAR TWINS tells the tale of Prince Chunse and Pose (Chunsay and Posay), stars who live in the western spiral arm of the galaxy, with guest appearances by the Sun, the Lightning and the Raven. The trilogy is being described by the collective title MIYAZAWA'S TRUNK.

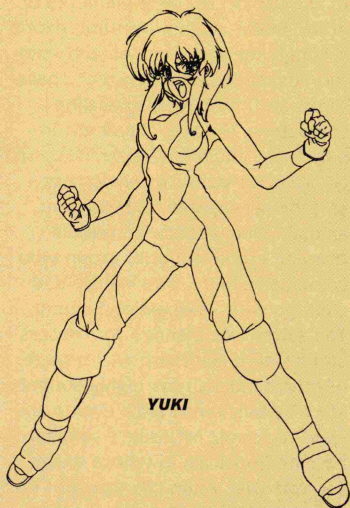
## GAME ON!

An RPG with another famous designer attached to it is QUO VADIS, which has design work by Haruhiko Mikimoto, aka Hal - which also happens to be the name of our hero. Your task is to guide Hal out of highschool and through a military career until he rises to the dizzy heights of Admiralty, trying along the way to ensure that his classmates and their dreams don't perish on the bleak battlefields of the future. You'll get two and three-dimensional graphics on your Sega Saturn, and the game features voice work by Mariko Kouda, Hekiru Shiina and Michiko Neya. These seiyuu also feature in the same roles in the radio drama version, and there's a tie-in novelisation too.

Meanwhile Tetsuo Imagawa of GIANT ROBO fame is helming CRASH JUNKIES for the Playstation; in keeping with his passion for wacky Western influences, the concept is rooted in the weirdness of WACKY RACES and the charas have a 'Hanna Barbera' feel to the styling. They race through zones including a dark cave, a snowy hillside and an underwater realm. An autumn 96 release is promised.



# newscan



YUKI

And then there's BLIZZARD YUKI, an SNES game from KSS - and surely there must be an anime to follow, given the DIRTY PAIR-style chara designs, shared antecedents in women's wrestling, and names like Darkstar Chaos, Thunder Dragonette, Chelsea Haneda and our heroine Blizzard Yuki. The manga is running in Monthly Shonen Ace, the game hits the shelves in February.

## MEMORY BOXES

A tribute to seiyuu Yasuo Yamada, who died last year, appears on 3rd March in the form of the LUPIN III TV SPECIAL PERFECTION BOX. It contains 550 minutes of Monkey Punch mayhen, every TV special featuring Yamada from 1989 to 1994, transferred direct from the original negatives onto laserdisc. There's even an all-new Monkey Punch illo on the inner sleeve. From the sublime BYE BYE LIBERTY to BURN! ZANTETSUKEN, this is pure magic and a great way to spend Y37000, or around £250.

And 16 years on from the original TV series release, you can get all 24 episodes of BLUE NOAH in an LD boxed set at Y43000, nearly £300. Blue Noah was dubbed into English under the title THUNDERSUB and a single video tape was released in the UK some years ago.

## GODZILLA'S LAST RAMPAGE?

Big G goes to Hong Kong for his latest, and possibly last, outing, GODZILLA VERSUS DESTROYER. The stage is set for a (sorry, but this is irresistible) monster confrontation. A funeral service was held for Godzilla in Japan at New Year, seeming to indicate that Toho have *really* made up their corporate mind to ice the big green one. Jolyon Yates reports on the film in our next issue



Below: Character design work by the inimitable Haruhiko Mikimoto for QUO VADIS



Picture left: RURO NO KENSHIN (THE SWORD OF RURO)  
Back row: SANOSUKE SAGARA  
Center Row left: YAHIKO MYOJIN,  
Center row right KAORU KAMIYA  
Front row: KENSHIN HIMURA

## JUST LIKE THE MANGA

Fans of the RURO NO KENSHIN manga, like Sakura Studio's Peter Evans, can breathe freely again. The chara designs in the anime are apparently 'pretty close' to the manga. The theme song is by the four-piece 'super popular schoolkid group' Judy & Mary, who are 'a quartet, just like the leads in RURO'. (And *this* they call a gimmick?) Said quartet - hero Kenshin Himura, his loyal beloved Kaoru Kamiya, mistress of the Kamiya Dojo, the towering Sanosuke Sakara, and tiny Yahiko Myojin - go adventuring in THE SWORD OF RURO.

## CORRECTION FROM LAST ISSUE

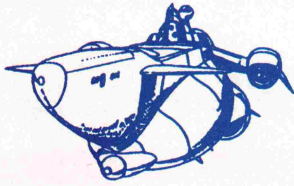
Carl Horn has pointed out two errors in the printed version of his article on Gainax in issue 10.

At the beginning of the third paragraph of the segment marked by the song title (Alice in Chains, "Brother"), the words "Shinseiki Evangelion's literal translation would be 'New Genesis Evangelion'" should properly read, "Shinseiki Evangelion's literal translation would be 'New Century Evangelion'".

Also, at the end of the seventh paragraph of the segment marked by the song title (Smashing Pumpkins, "Rocket"), the sentence ending "...but rather the welcome fading of what he regards as Japan's longtime stagnation, complacency, and lack of real opportunity—to a very exciting time of opportunity." should read "...but rather the welcome fading of what he regards as Japan's longtime stagnation, complacency, and lack of real prospects—to a very exciting time of opportunity."

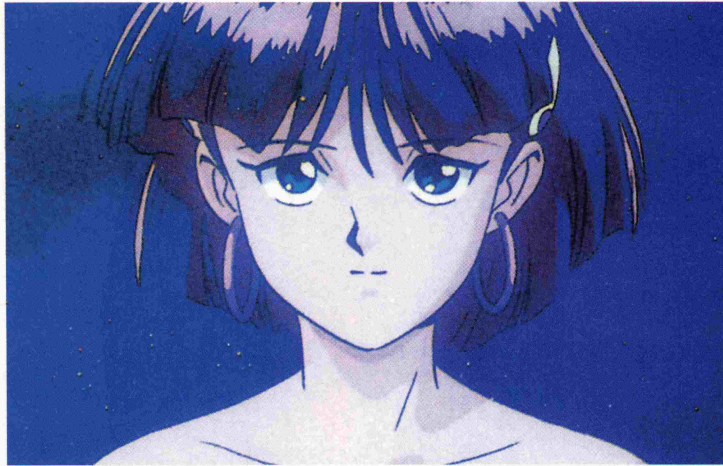
In last issue's NEWSKAN, the piece and picture on SHINKAITEI GUNKAN were incorrectly headlined DARK BLUE FLEET. Sorry!





## Jules Verne

was a true visionary, an early science fiction writer who understood that the genre needed thrills as well as technology. His novel *20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA* still exerts a powerful fascination even today, and it was this book that inspired the gifted young team at Gainax when they made their first TV series for NHK. To paraphrase another gifted writer, Verne gave us the nineteenth century as it never was, but should have been; and taking the world Verne created, its atmosphere of adventure and discovery charged with high technology and the wonder of science, as their model, Gainax told the story of Nadia, a teenage acrobat with a travelling circus, of Jean, a young Frenchman determined to be a great aviator, and their search for their entwined destiny. They named their series *FUSHIGI NO UMI NO NADIA - NADIA OF THE MYSTERIOUS SEAS* - but it was also known to English-speaking fans by another title, derived from the gem Nadia wears round her neck and which has such a pivotal role in the story - *THE SECRET OF BLUE WATER*.



The series hit the airwaves in Japan in April 1990. NHK had gone all out for mainstream success, selecting Gainax and inspired young director Hideaki Anno to head the project. Anno puts the show's success down to the use of 'the best elements of other anime', high adventure, exotic settings, the mix of nineteenth-century inventions and high-tech spaceships, and the hugely appealing characters. The star character, in particular, could have been designed to order for political correctness - an athletic, capable, independent, animal-loving vegetarian female from an ethnic minority group who combines beauty, intelligence and courage with kindness and charm. The series was planned for success and it delivered; there was a spate of merchandise, now highly sought after by fans, and Nadia even managed to topple Miyazaki's seminal heroine Nausicaa, in whose image she was cast, from the top spot in the ANIMAGE reader poll for the first time since 1984. Her adventures ran for 39 episodes but fans still wanted more. In June 1991 a movie version set 3 years after the series hit Japanese cinemas. There was even a manga version - in 1993 Bandai released a Cyber Comix Special Edition containing a selection of strips based (some very loosely) on the series.

Carl Macek of Streamline Pictures recognised the enduring classic qualities of the series and released

*Paris, 1889 ... a young aviator and a circus acrobat set out to uncover the mystery of an amulet with a beautiful blue stone, and find themselves walking into danger, adventure, and a diabolical scheme to bring the world under the dominion of a new Atlantis ...*



an English dub on home video in the USA. Now, Orion Home Video are bringing the story to the American mass market in a budget-priced series of eight 94-minute tapes, starting on January 30th 1996. Verne's book made the journey halfway round the world to inspire Gainax; now their work too has come halfway round the world to delight a new audience.

Let's go back to France. It is spring-time in 1889. The Belle Epoque is in full swing and the great, the good and the gawkers are flocking to Paris for the World Science Exposition. The Industrial Revolution is changing the world and the lives of its people, with new discoveries and an ever-increasing reliance on and interest in science. The world is almost on the threshold of a new century; there's a feeling of optimism and adventure in the air. Paris in the Spring ... a world dedicated to prosperity and progress ... a world where anything could happen ...

#### **THE BACKGROUND**

In the 1880s, shipping began to disappear at an alarming rate. Ships had always been lost at sea, through bad weather, bad luck or disaster, but this was something different; vessels were lost without trace and without rhyme or reason. Nations accused each other of secret treachery; seamen, always



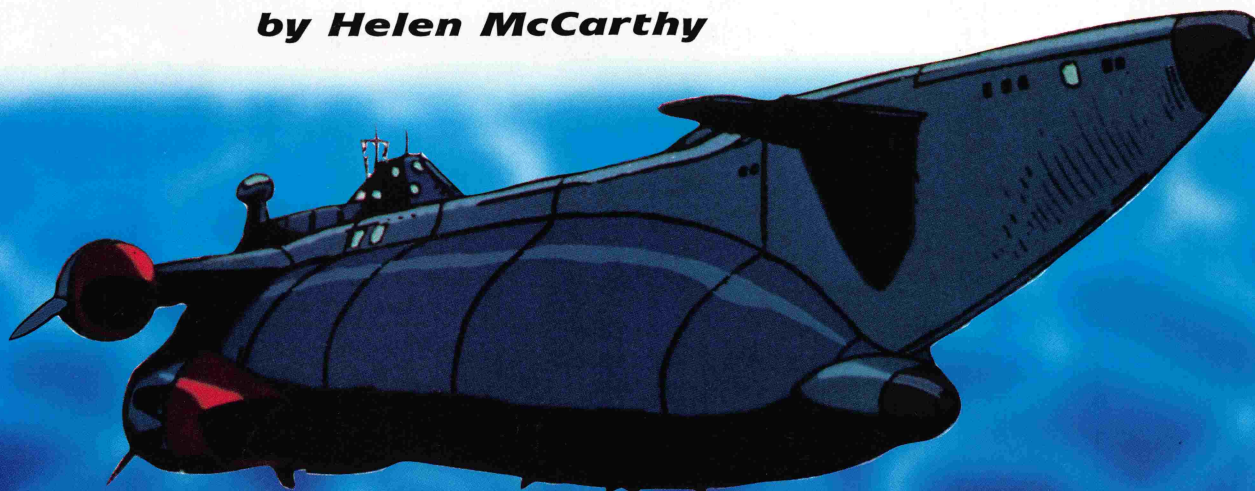
willing to resurrect the old legends, bandied tales of seamonsters back and forth, and blamed the vast increase in sea traffic, caused by the world's ever-expanding seaborne trade, for disturbing the rest of these mighty, mythical creatures. Responsibility, however, rested with an even more fantastic body, the secret organisation known as Neo-Atlantis.

The roots of Neo-Atlantis go back over two million years to the point when the High Atlanteans of planet Atlantis B colonised planet Earth. They experimented on the local life forms in an effort to produce a higher form of intelligence; their first success, an aquatic creature, had a very high intelligence but couldn't live out of water. The next attempt used apes as a base and after much trial and error a large humanoid, Adam, was the first of their new race of genetically engineered beings. Mankind slowly evolved and began to develop its own civilisations; just at this point, internal strife erupted into war in the Atlantean cities and tore their civilisation apart. Three of the city-states made a pact to round up as many of the Earth's native species as they could and hide them in giant colony ships (also known as ARKS) until the wars were over.

The ships known as Red Noah and Blue Noah were lost. Blue Noah never released its cargo of

# THE SECRET OF BLUE WATER

**by Helen McCarthy**



dinosaurs. (The Atlantean intervention explains not only the sudden disappearance of all these creatures from the earth in a short time, but their common appearance alongside man in popular mythology despite the lack of evidence in the archaeological record.) Red Noah is adrift awaiting a new commander. The third Ark ended up in the Antarctic as a base for a submarine vessel known as the Nautilus, of which more later. The Atlantean cities slowly fell as the war continued to rage. Distant echoes of this terrible disaster can be found in almost every earthly nation's mythology; at last only the city M78 survived. As man grew in capability and expanded over the Earth, the Atlanteans continued to observe their creation's progress, and occasionally to intervene in human history; but as the human population grew, and its scientific capability increased, so did the likelihood of eventual conflict.

Sometime in the mid-1800s, the High Priest of M78 proposed to stop tinkering and leave mankind to follow its own course. Some Atlanteans on the ruling council did not agree; they saw mankind as an eventual threat and favoured culling humans, or their enslavement, leaving Atlanteans in control of the Earth for ever. Eventually, the opposition leader Gargoyl kidnapped the High Priest's son and used him as a figurehead to seize power, promising the people of Atlantis a new order, a 'Neo Atlantis', which would rule the Earth forever under 'Emperor Neo', with him in control. To warn the High Priest not to interfere, Gargoyl murdered his wife.

The High Priest's other child, an infant daughter, was smuggled out of the city with the last of the Atlantean Artefact Stones, the only surviving key to control of the powerful technologies of Atlantis, in the hope that he would be able to join her after completing his self-appointed task - to sabotage the scientific and weapons systems in the 'Tower of Babel', a massive military installation, so that the enemy would be unable to use them. In the

process he killed everyone left in the city; only he and a small group of trusted companions survived, taking to the seas aboard their submarine, the Nautilus. Gargoyl gathered his surviving followers and the boy-Emperor and escaped to a previously built stronghold to continue his plot to dominate the Earth. The child had been almost killed in the destruction of M78, so Gargoyl built a cyborg body to keep his claim to power alive.

But contact with the little Princess and those entrusted with her care was lost and she vanished. Now both the High Priest and the forces of evil led by Gargoyl are seeking the missing Princess. Whoever has possession of her, and the Stone, will be able to call on whatever remnants of Atlantean technology survived the war - perhaps even the mighty colony ship Red Noah with its unimaginably powerful weaponry. Meanwhile, Gargoyl's people are doing their utmost to destabilise Earth's political situation and bring the world to open war. Such a conflict would exhaust the nations of Earth and set their newfound technological process back by decades; during or after the conflict, Neo-Atlantis would step in and bind the devastated nations under its yoke. One girl stands between humankind and slavery - and she doesn't even know it. Not yet.

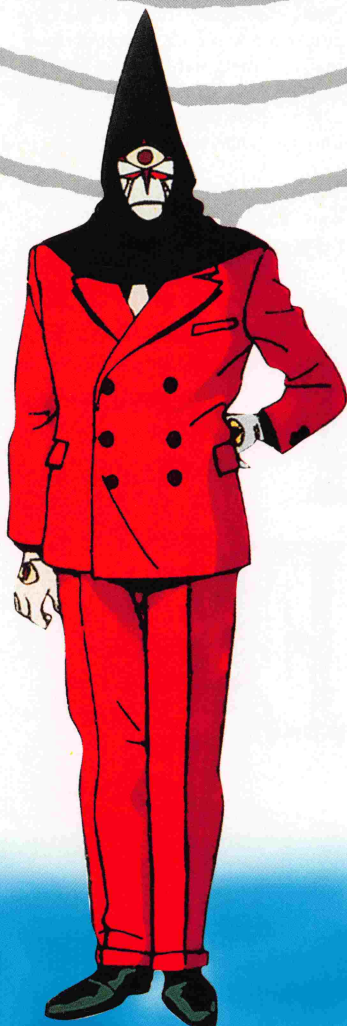
#### THE MAJOR CHARACTERS

This list covers only the most important characters in the story. There are a host of others who appear only briefly or have less important roles but who are engaging and fascinating in their own right. The characters created for the series are one of its major charms and demonstrate the wide-ranging design and

writing abilities of the Gainax team.

**NADIA** is a capable and headstrong young woman, just fourteen years old when our story begins. She knows nothing of her past or her parentage, except that she was born in a distant land and believes she has a brother. She has lived with a travelling circus since she was very young. The only possession to have come to her from her past is her pendant with its beautiful blue crystal; this mysterious jewel is able to warn her of approaching danger. She appears to have some African or Asian blood because she is darkskinned and darkhaired with wonderful blue green eyes, but her exotic - and skimpy! - style of dress at the start of the series has more to do with her environment and her work as an acrobat and animal handler. She has an almost magical empathy with animals, and is able to engage her lion cub King in more or less normal conversation. She is a committed vegetarian, ever since seeing a cow on its last journey to the slaughterhouse, and is fiercely self-reliant, not at all a typical delicate nineteenth-century Miss. Physically fearless, she terrifies Jean at their first meeting with her acrobatic antics, yet she also has a gentler side. She and Jean will eventually grow to love one another, though Nadia has another romantic adventure first!

**JEAN** - Jean Coq de Raltique is also an orphan; born in le Havre, where he has lived for all his fourteen years, he lost his mother when he was very small and lives with his aunt and uncle, although he has inherited a house from his late father. He has red hair and freckles. He's a friendly, pleasant young man, full of good intentions and always wanting to help people out, but often saying and doing the wrong



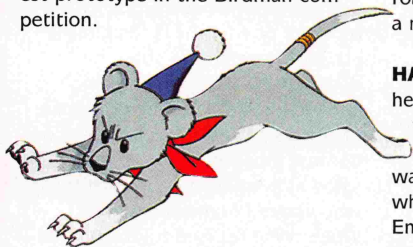
GARGOYL



NADIA

JEAN

thing. He has a strong mechanical bent and a real passion for discovery. His father, an inventor, was lost at sea under mysterious circumstances. (In fact, his submarine was attacked by a 'sea monster', i.e. a Neo-Atlantean craft.) Father and son were very close and used to work on ideas and inventions together. Jean refuses to accept his father's death and has devoted himself to developing a flying machine so that he can search the world for him. This is why he and his uncle are heading for the Exposition in Paris - Jean means to enter his latest prototype in the Birdman competition.



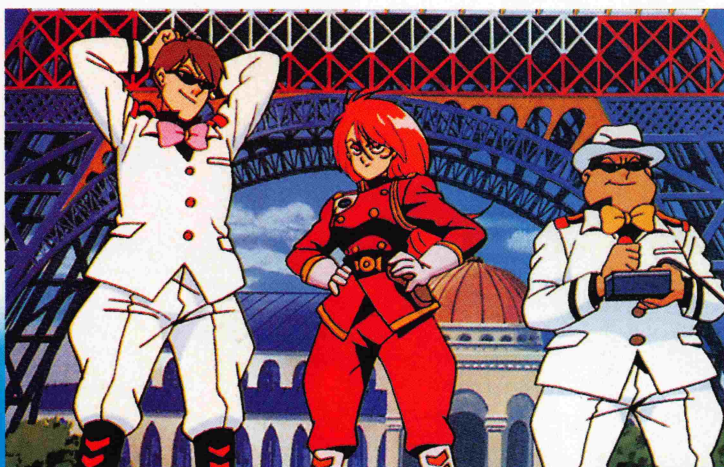
**KING** is a grey lion cub with an uncanny ability to seem almost human. The youngest of the circus lions in Nadia's care, he loves to be the centre of attention and is devoted to his young handler. At first he is very jealous of Jean but later comes to trust him, and loves Mary, though he finds her a little too rough.

**GRANDIS GRANVAL** is a sultry green-eyed redhead, a rich, beautiful and elegant young woman whose character has been completely ruined by a disappointment in love. The only child of a wealthy and noble Spanish family, she was swept off her feet by one Gonzales, a dashing adventurer who persuaded her father to sign the entire family fortune over to him by promising to marry his adored daughter. The cad then threw the dotting father and his stary-eyed daughter out on the

street, and Grandis was transformed by this experience into the most self-centred, objectionable and arrogant individual in the world. She now roams the globe bent on having a good time and taking whatever she wants by a combination of ruthlessness, cunning and criminal activity. However, the courageous and outgoing girl she was still lurks inside her hard shell. She comes to Paris to steal Nadia's pendant, having heard stories of the renowned "Blue Water" and decided it was just the jewel for her. Later, she and Nadia will become friends, and for a while she will even succumb to a major crush on Captain Nemo.

**HANSON** is one of Grandis' two henchman, an oddly assorted pair who like their employer conceal soft streaks under harsh outward appearances. No-one knows where he comes from though England and Italy are mentioned as possibilities in much literature on the series. He's short, chubby and easygoing, seeming stupid at times but with a sharp mind. Hanson is a mechanical genius and this gives him much in common with Jean; when they come into contact with Atlantean technology the two are equally fascinated by it. Being a warmhearted, romantic chap, Hanson develops a passion for Electra, but this doesn't come to anything.

**SANSON RAVENBROY** has Herculean strength, honed in the tough shanty town where he was born; again, it's not known exactly where this was but England and Italy are possibilities. He fancies himself as a ladies' man and is a bit of a dandy, very fussy about his appearance. He's tall, slim, cool, dashing, handsome, an ace driver, a crack shot - is it any wonder he seems a bit arrogant at times? But



SANSON

GRANDIS

HANSON



he's also very softhearted - his caring side shows up several times in the series and he ends up as little Mary's friend and protector.

**MARY ANN** was born in Marseilles but has lived most of her three years on a small island in the Atlantic, where her parents moved to escape the bustle of the modern world and live a simple life. The island was chosen as a base by the Neo-Atlanteans, and Mary's parents were killed (along with her pet dog) while trying to escape. Her mother died shielding Mary from the bullets with her body, and Jean and Nadia find her there. Understandably distraught after witnessing such horrors, she is a resilient and cheerful child and soon comes to accept and love her new friends as a second family. She has reddish hair, huge blue eyes and is incurably inquisitive and horribly precocious. Some of her 'innocent' remarks cause much merriment and embarrassment to the other cast members!

**CAPTAIN NEMO** is, of course, the Captain of the Nautilus. He is also the former High Priest of M78 and Nadia's father. Having been betrayed by his friend, seen his wife killed and his son kidnapped, lost his daughter, and been responsible for the deaths of most of his surviving people and the destruction of their city, he is understandably a withdrawn and taciturn man, haunt-

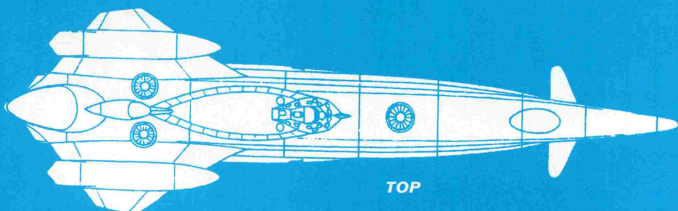


MARY ANN

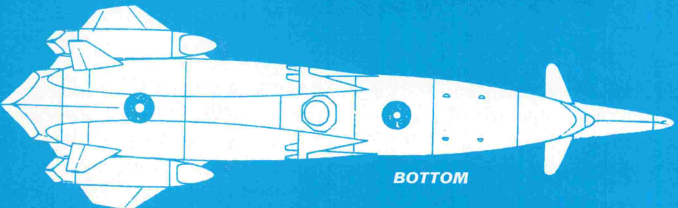
# Nautilus



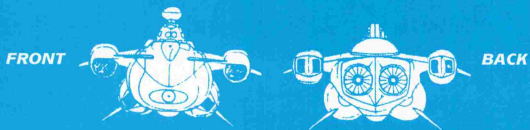
SIDE



TOP

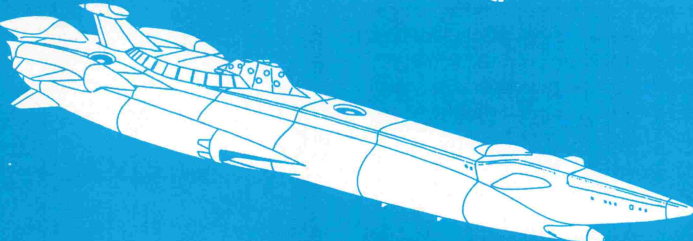
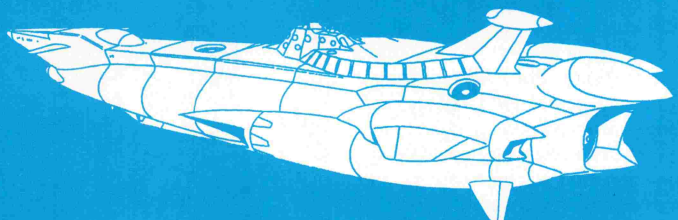


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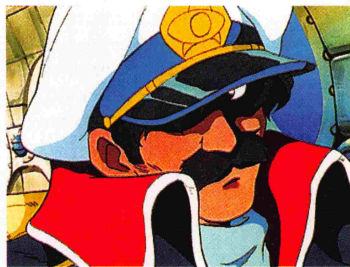


FRONT

BACK



**Completion Date :** 19.12.1888  
**Materials :** Space Metal; Space Titanium, etc.  
**Displacement :** 43,000 tonnes  
**Overall Length :** 152 m  
**Water Line :** 141 m  
**Breadth Extreme :** 47 m  
**Height :** 25 m  
**Draft :** 9 m  
**Main Engine :** Temperate match displacement  
**Engine Fuel :** Hydrogen & Antimatter Hydrogen  
**Generating Power, Infinity/Velocity :** 99% the speed of sound (on the surface) 208 kt (Under the surface)  
**Endurance :** 296,000 Light Years  
**Captain :** Nemo



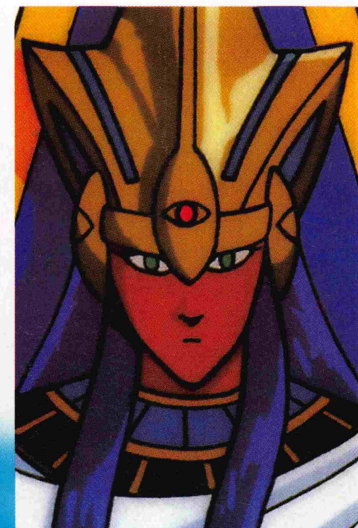
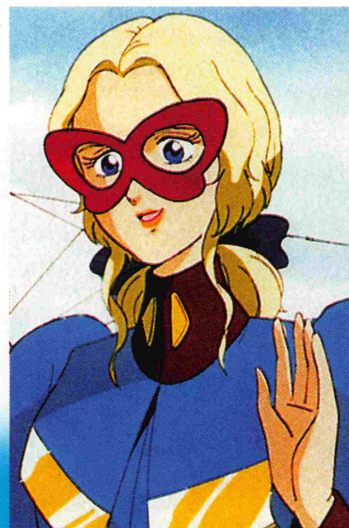
ed by the ghosts of his past. Although he conceals his emotions and seems always cool and rational, he makes Electra, his first officer, almost a substitute daughter. Only after meeting Nadia again and realising that his child is alive and well does he begin to have some hope for the future. He then realises that his feelings for Electra are not fatherly... It appears (though there is room for doubt) that he finally sacrifices his life to ensure that she and her world will be safe. Named for the Jules Verne character, his name means 'nobody' in Latin.

**ELECTRA** is one of the few survivors of the destruction of M78; Nemo found her in the ruins mourning for her dead brother, and brought her up as one of his crew. When she learned of his role in the war and in her brother's death, she was shocked and felt betrayed, but continued to work as an efficient officer of the Nautilus; but when Nadia and Jean arrive on the ship, she and the young man strike up an instant rapport. Her brother would have been his age had he lived, and she treats him as a second brother. Nadia is a constant reminder that she has lost all her loved ones while the man responsible has had his own daughter restored to him.

Bitterly angry, she even considers killing Nemo, but in the end her feelings for him are too strong ... A slender, beautiful blue-eyed blonde, she gets on well with just about everyone - except Grandis!

**GARGOYLE** is not even an Atlantean, although he does not know this; he is a gifted human who was adopted as an infant by the city, given every advantage of Atlantean education and training, and who rose to become an officer in the Atlantean military. His determination to promote the racial dominance of Atlanteans is thus a mockery of what he is, and in the end his origins bring about his downfall. He was one of Nemo's closest friends, but when the issue of the advancing human population became more and more complex, he sided against Nemo and with those who wanted humans enslaved. When some refused to accept this view, he took ruthless action to get his own way. He's a coldhearted and singleminded tyrant. His face is not revealed until the last episode of the series; he and his troops wear masks and hoods at all times.

**EMPEROR NEO** is now not merely a puppet but almost entirely a cyborg, needing the sustenance of complex systems and existing simply as a figurehead for the Neo-Atlantean movement and Gargoyl's ambitions. The former Venusis, Nadia's brother, seems to have gone forever; yet his sister can still awaken feelings in him which threaten Gargoyl's plots. He doesn't appear until the closing episodes of the series.



## MAJOR MECHA

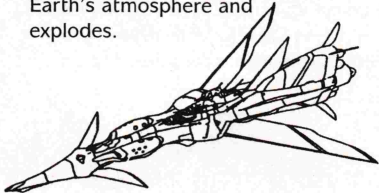
As with the characters, there are many magnificent machines both large and small in the series, including Jean's various flying machines, the circus machinery and the sophisticated robot and satellite technology of Neo-Atlantis. You have to watch every episode to enjoy them to the full!

### NAUTILUS

Originally carried on the Red Noah, the Nautilus is an advanced submarine powered by a nuclear fusion reactor and can travel at 99% of the speed of sound on the surface, and 208 knots underwater. Its range is 296,000 light years and it's a massive 152 metres long with a displacement of 43,000 tonnes. heavily armed, it has eight surface-to-air missiles in its midsection, plus two lines of machine guns and eight capsule launchers with hundreds of mines in its fuel pod wings. Its also has a 'electroshock' exterior defence mechanism. It's not invulnerable, however, and is destroyed by a massive electromagnet in episode 21.

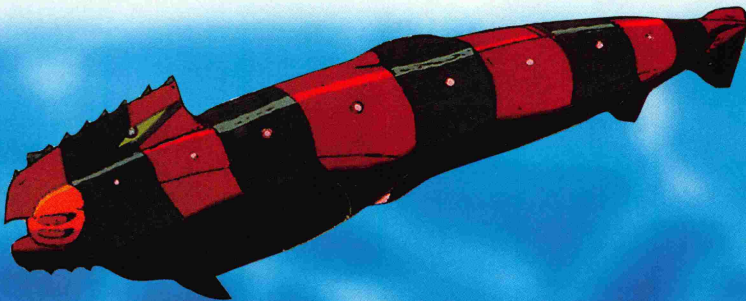
### NEO-NAUTILUS

The renamed EXELION makes its debut in episode 36; it's not just a submarine but a fully operational spaceship. It's three times the size of its predecessor and has two laser cannon-equipped gun turrets, a multidirectional laser defence system, and an energy shield. When eventually the Neo-Nautilus faces the Red Noah in space, it falls into Earth's atmosphere and explodes.

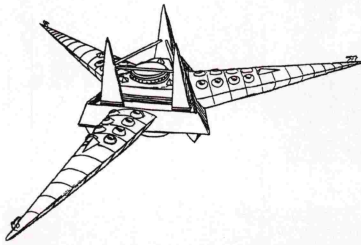


### GARFISH

There are two types of this Neo-Atlantean submarine, both luridly coloured in red and grey stripes. One has a dorsal fin with spiked 'teeth' to rip the hull of ships above it, the other has its 'teeth' along the



bow. This second type is also longer and sleeker, and has fore and aft torpedo tubes and capsule mines. Its chubbier brother has fore and aft torpedo tubes plus two pop-up machine gun turrets and depth charges. Seamen mistake the Garfish for a 'sea monster' because of its glowing red portholes, striped body and the 'eye' symbol painted on the fins.



### SKYSHIP

Gargoyle's massive triangular flying machines carry a mighty arsenal. Around the control centre in the upper hull are three pyramids; three more, one in each corner, hide atomic cannon. The underside carries a bomb launcher which itself can be used as a huge bomb, and there is a huge electromagnet. The transportation beam makes access fast and safe and the starship-style invisible shield protects it from most attack, although the ship can be shot down - as the Neo-Nautilus proves.

### CALCHARODON

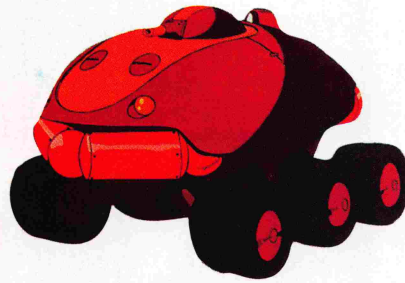
A sort of zeppelin catamaran, this 16-engined craft has a metal fish-shaped capsule slung beneath the twin balloons. It is defended by a single twin-gunned turret and can also scatter mines. It's not exactly inconspicuous in its mauve and purple striped livery, but since flying is in its infancy in human society this obviously didn't figure in Gargoyle's thinking!

### RED NOAH

A huge circular space colony ship which makes its first appearance disguised as an island, this is a heavily armed craft with massive attack and defence mechanisms, including a 'Tower of Babel', the weapons array whose explosion destroyed M78.

### GRATAN

The GRAndis TANK was designed and built by Hanson for Grandis; the craft has been christened "Catherine". It's a six-wheel-drive vehicle with huge tyres, which also has legs; these can unfold from beneath the bodywork to raise the tank into the air and let it 'walk' over trees and small buildings. It also has a 'boat mode' - the rear legs have concealed propellers - and a 'balloon mode'. A gun turret, pop-up front-mounted viewing cameras and extensible mechanical arms complete its special features. Hanson tinkers it into other forms for various purposes as the series progresses; in episode 10 it becomes a submersible minesweeper, and in episode 38 it is used to penetrate the Red Noah, its gun turret assuming decidedly dalek-like proportions!



Above:  
**GRATAN G-1 MODE**

Top left:  
**SKYSHIP**

Center Left:  
**NEO-NAUTILUS**

Bottom Left:  
**GARFISH**

## THE STAFF

Chief Director **Hideaki Anno**  
Chara design & co-director  
**Yoshiyuki Sadamoto**  
Animation director & chara design  
**Shunji Suzuki**  
Art director **Masanori Kikuchi**  
**Hiroshi Sasaki**  
Mecha design **Shoichi Masuo**  
Continuity director & backgrounds  
**Mahiro Maeda**  
Continuity & storyboards  
**Masa Yuki**  
**Takeshi Mori**  
Music director **Shiro Sasisu**  
Sound Director  
**Katsunori Shimizu**  
Editor **Akio Satsukawa**  
Producer **Hiroshi Kubota**  
Production Co. **Gainax**

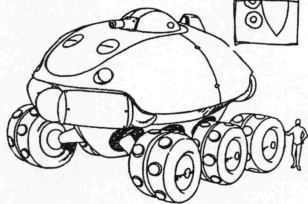
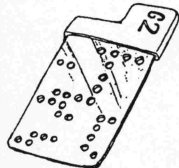
## CAST

NADIA **Yoshino Takamori**  
JEAN **Noriko Hidaka**  
MARIE **Yuko Mizutani**  
KING **Toshiharu Sakurai**  
GRANDIS **Kumiko Takizawa**  
SANSON **Kenyu Horiuchi**  
HANSON **Toshiharu Sakurai**  
JEAN'S UNCLE **Hiroshi Masuoka**  
JEAN'S AUNT **Natsuko Fuji**  
CIRCUS MASTER  
**Shigeo Sasaoko**  
NEMO **Akio Otsuka**  
ELECTRA **Kikuko Inoue**  
GARGOYLE **Motomu Kiyokawa**

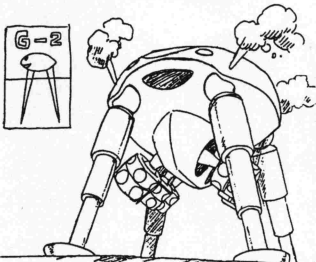


## GRATAN HENSHIN! \*

The GRATAN is able to adopt various 'modes' to suit its situation. These transformations are activated by slotting special punch-cards (below) into its control panel



G-1 WHEEL MODE

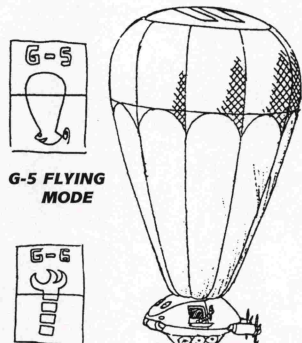
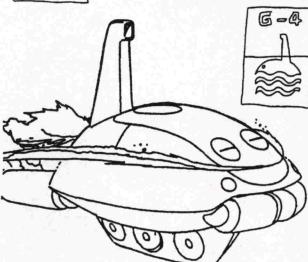


G-2 STANDING MODE

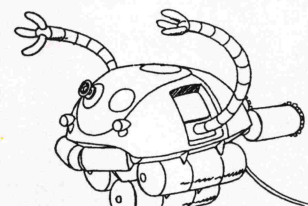
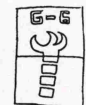


G-3 60mm CANNON MODE

G-4 WATER MODE

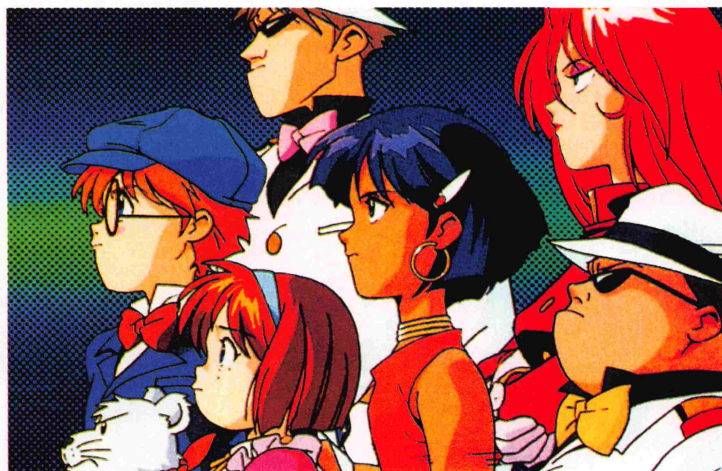
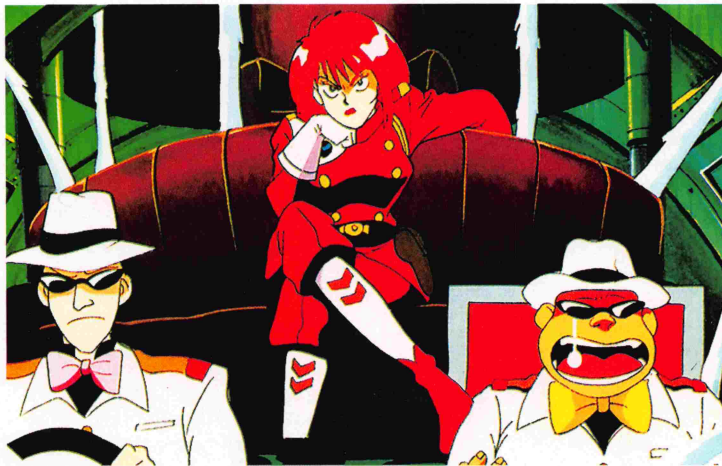


G-5 FLYING MODE



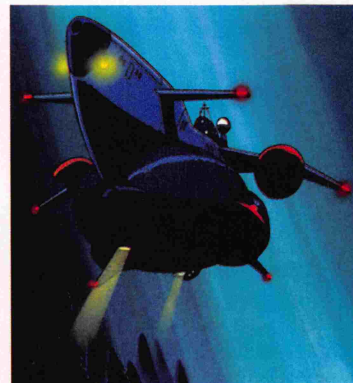
G-6 MAGIC HAND MODE

\* Transform!

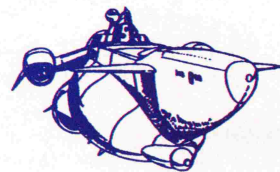


## WHAT'S THE SECRET?

This brief summary shows that there's far more to THE SECRET OF BLUE WATER than can be contained in a magazine article. The story is complex, the characters are attractive, the mecha are fascinating and the settings and backgrounds create constant interest. While the English dub loses some wonderful performances by talented Japanese voice actors, including the work of Akio Otsuka and Kikuko Inoue, it also makes the series accessible to a mass audience, which is what the originators intended. Jules Verne was a popular author working in a mass entertainment medium, yet his work did not reach its widest audiences until it was translated out of



its original language. Gainax's work, translated out of its language of origin, will give a whole new audience of non-Japanese speakers the chance to become fans of this wonderful series, and hopefully encourage them to explore and enjoy other anime titles too. THE SECRET OF BLUE WATER is for everyone who loves romance, adventure and ani-



THE SECRET OF BLUE WATER © NHK, Sogovision, Toho. All pictures used in this feature are as above and are used by permission of Orion Home Video and Streamline Pictures, with the kind assistance of Jonna L. Winnicki. The author gratefully acknowledges the help provided by information printed in NEWTYPE, ANIMEDIA, ANIMAGE, and work by Darren Ashmore and Wil Overton in ANIME UK MAGAZINE #5 in the winter of 1992, plus fanzine and Internet work by Peter Evans, Brian Longstaff, Ewart Solomon, Dave Kirwin, Doug Dlin, Larry Mann, Theo Ching, Kong Chang, Kaori Seino, Dave Cotelessa, Cal-Animage, and Walter Amos. This article is dedicated to Robodaz and Yumiko, with love.

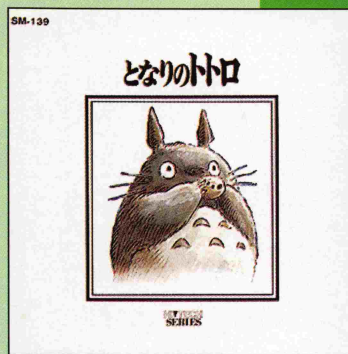


Still no UK release for TOTORO, and with the rights currently at \$75,000 it doesn't look particularly likely in the near future. Hayao Miyazaki's film remains one of anime fandom's all-time greats, and since whoever eventually buys the UK rights will need to put the film on in cinemas to recoup the money, even the hardest of hard-core otaku will grudgingly admit that TOTORO's UK release is better done late and well than soon and cheaply. In the meantime, this month's Japan Rocks delves into the mysteries of the TOTORO CD, which is one of the more readily-available anime soundtracks over here.

As a relatively-recent convert to Hayao Miyazaki's fluffy tree-spirit, I sympathise with those many avowed anime fans who remain in the dark about this wonderful film through lack of otaku contacts or an NTSC video recorder. To summarise from Miyazaki's own copious liner notes, he deliberately set out to make a cartoon that stood apart from the 'kids versus grown-ups' themes that he saw in so many contemporary anime. Somewhat disenchanting with so many modern parents, who seemed happy to let their VCR babysit for them, Miyazaki resolved to create a film that wouldn't fill the children's minds with conflict and struggle; if you're looking for 'attitude', you won't find it in TOTORO. He wrote a pastoral fairy-tale for the urban children of Japan, transporting them to an idyllic countryside, devoid of bullies, war and everyday nastiness. TOTORO has no 'enemy' for the protagonists to defeat, it is nothing more than a celebration of the magic of childhood, where strange creatures live in the attic and mythical beings play in the forest.

Jo Hisaishi's score for the film included wonderfully evocative orchestral pieces and two unforgettable songs, with lyrics by Miyazaki himself and his collaborator Rieko Nakagawa. I have seen two TOTORO CDs on sale in the UK, and as per usual with Japan Rocks, it's my duty to report that all is not as it seems. The nomenclature can be rather confusing, even for those who can read Japanese. For example, **Totoro Image Songs** has a title that implies little relation to the soundtrack of the film. According to the most recent definition in Japan, an image album contains songs inspired by the events and music in a given film, rather than the soundtrack itself. Imagine my surprise when I put **Totoro Image Songs** on the stereo and discovered that while there were indeed a few 'image' tracks on the CD, it also contains all the important parts of the soundtrack itself.

It begins with *My Neighbour Totoro*, the lovely, fairytale ending theme which Miyazaki's audiences never



## JONATHAN CLEMENTS JAPAN ROCKS

### IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY...

seem to get out of their head. The mental *Strolling* (#3) will be familiar to TOTORO fans as the opening title song. 'Strolling on, strolling on / And I'm feeling fine / Walking is what I like to do...' The recurring orchestral theme of the *Breeze-Blown Path*, which underlies much of the action (and is reprised for the primal tree-growing scene) is present in both its original instrumental version (#11) and as an image song (#2). The latter adds a haunting choir of children's voices, with Miyazaki working his magic once more: this is the first time I've ever heard a choir of Japanese children who weren't deliberately singing flat. For some reason, Japanese record producers seem to think that off-key singing is cute, and this assumption has ruined many an album for me. Not so with **Totoro Image Songs**; Miyazaki wants his songs to be sung, not murdered. For this reason, the detailed liner notes include complete lyrics for

every song on the album, mainly in the hiragana syllabary and only including the characters that a Japanese five-year old would be able to read without any difficulty.

The image songs themselves mainly set words to music already extant in the film. My own personal favourite is *The Catbus Song* (#6) which is such a predictable eight-bar boogie-woogie that it is possible to hum along to the entire tune, through every single key-change, after having heard nothing more than the first few bars. There's also the sweet elegy *Mother* (#8), a lullaby by/to an absent parent, which is the underlying theme of both the film itself, and of Miyazaki's original reason for making it. Along with all the lesser, but worthy, songs on this album, this purchase comes thoroughly recommended.

If only the same could be said for the **Totoro High Tech Series**. The stark

white cover usually signifies a 'symphonic' album in Japanese music. Regular readers will already know of the *Akira Symphonic* album, which did away with all the sound-bites from the film, and the *Luna Sea Symphonic* back in one of the early Japan Rocks columns, which was an orchestral reprise of a pop band's greatest hits. Despite its appearance, however, this CD is not 'symphonic'. Nor is it, as the name might suggest, a rave-music remix of the TOTORO soundtrack. The mind boggles at the mere thought.

Instead, **Totoro High Tech Series** is a rather naff grab-bag of elevator music, the sort of thing that burger bars use to try and get you out as quickly as possible. The sound of bored session musicians stomping through a slow-tempo version of *My Neighbour Totoro* (#1) on the mandolin and *Strolling* (#2) on vibraphone/accordion is an infuriating travesty, and although the CD is not completely awful, it manages to come pretty close. There's a passable honky-tonk piano and blues-guitar on *The Catbus Song* (#5), and the use of tabla, sitar, oboe and flute on *The Dusting Song* (#4) gives it a mellow, Oriental feel, but these tracks alone are not worth the price of the album. The liner notes are a Zen commentary in blankness, and Jo Hisaishi's credit on the staff-listing looks more like a compulsory musicians' union annotation than a genuine indicator of his willing contribution to the project. To be avoided at all costs, even by the die-hard TOTORO fan.

But even the **Totoro High Tech Series** can't detract from the achievement of Miyazaki and his gang with **Totoro Image Songs**. I can only say again that it's a great accompaniment to the film, and heartily recommend it to anyone who's ever sat in the garden, trying to make acorns grow.

**Totoro Image Songs.**  
SM Records, SM-019. (recommended)

**Totoro High Tech Series**  
SM Records, SM-139.



Japanese CDs and their Hong Kong versions can be found in a number of places in the UK, if you look hard enough. Try the Sheffield Space Centre (who offer an excellent mail order service); in London there's Tower Records in Piccadilly (anime can sometimes be found in the Film Soundtrack section and there is a Japanese section too), Books Nippon by St. Paul's Cathedral (mostly rock/pop/ballads), Sounds of China and Cannon & Co. in Chinatown.



# Hong Kong Comics

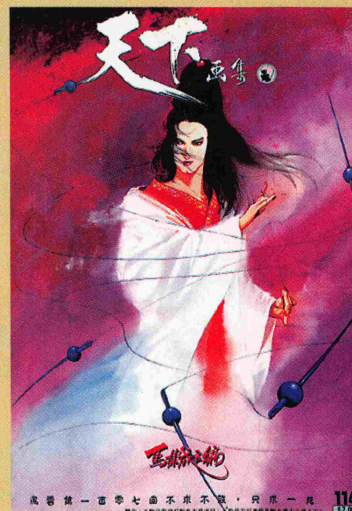
## The Second Wave

With the majority of anime now being made in Korea, it's becoming increasingly difficult to talk about anime as an exclusively 'Japanese' product. Titles such as *TENCHI MUYO*, *SOL BIANCA*, *EL HAZARD*, *ARMITAGE III* and even *GHOST IN THE SHELL* had considerable input from Korean inbetweeners, even if the key animators remained Japanese. There's a similar internationalisation going on in the manga business. It used to be easy to distinguish between manga (ie. Japanese comics) and comics from the rest of the world, but as the manga art-style catches on it becomes very hard to draw the line. The term 'pseudomanga' was coined to deal with those comics like *DIRTY PAIR* that are not actually Japanese, but owe a great debt to Japanese scripts, styles or stories, but even that term is becoming difficult to define. When Kodansha tried to sell their manga *DEEP & BEAUTIFUL ASIA* for English translation, they didn't bother to mention that it was actually drawn by a Taiwanese artist, Zhen Wen. It was published in Japan and looked enough like any other manga to get away with it, so why bother mentioning little things like the artist's nationality?

When it comes to Hong Kong comics, the manga world ought to sit up and take notice. Following Jademan's short-lived move into English-language publishing in the 1980s, their shoes have now been filled by a new wave of Hong Kong independents. Reared on a diet of Japanese pop culture and steamed in the sweatshop oven of 1980s comic publishers, the new breed of Hong Kong comic producers split from their elders to form the dynamic new companies of the 1990s. Now with *CYBER WEAPON Z* breaking new ground in France, and plans mooted for a German edition of *CLUB MAD OF KILLER*, the time looks right for a few British editions of these accomplished works.

The second wave of Hong Kong comics production began almost by accident, with the demise of the largest company in the 'first-wave' field. Jademan Comics had led the market for years, under the firm control of its founder and lead artist

'Tony' Yuk-Long Wong. Wong was responsible for such titles as *DRUNKEN FIST*, *ORIENTAL HEROES* and *THE FORCE OF BUDDHA'S PALM*, all set in China's feudal past. He made no secret of his wish to gain a monopoly of the Hong Kong market, and had managed to beat away all but one of his competitors when disaster struck in the closing years of the 1980s. The succession of stock market crashes that began with Black Wednesday wiped out a considerable portion of Wong's assets, and he was driven to fiddle the company books in order to prevent a hostile takeover bid from the Sing Tao newspaper group.



When Wong was caught red-handed and jailed by the authorities, his company collapsed. The first casualties were the English translated editions of the more popular Jademan titles, but as artists and writers drifted away to set up their own companies, Jademan became a shadow of its former self. In 1992, when Wong was released from jail and discovered that all his best artists had defected to other companies, he was left with the problem of rebuilding the shattered Jademan empire. One method he tried was the legal purchase of Japanese sublicenses. He bought the Cantonese language rights for *DRAGONBALL*, *RANMA ½*, *PATLABOR* AND *DORAEMON*, all of which were also being televised. The TV tie-in was an immense success, and with the added bonus of being on the right side of the law for a change,

by JONATHAN CLEMENTS

## THE SECOND WAVE

Left: Illustration from *WIND AND CLOUD* (named after the two protagonists), published by Ma Win Sing's Tin Ha (UnderHeaven) Company. Below: Classic D&D: The Cover of Freeman's *CELIA* drawn by Patrick Yu

Jademan went on to license several more manga titles. Other companies followed suit, and although manga pirates were still operating at the time, pressure from their former partners in crime would eventually put them out of business. The final straw came in April 1993, when Freeman Comics purchased several sets of Cantonese language rights, and made it known that any pirates active after 1st May would be met with a private law suit.

Although manga piracy is officially on the decline in Hong Kong, some companies have turned to grey importing in order to make fast cash without the tiresome business of negotiating and translating. The most popular fiddle on certain company books at the moment is importing Chinese translations made by publishers in Taiwan. Since they are technically Taiwanese publications, there is no need to buy Hong Kong rights, not unlike selling American import comics in Britain before their British release. Such activities are not illegal, but are liable to anger the unfortunate companies who are paying for the right to bring out a Hong Kong edition. The Taiwanese edition of *CRAYON SHIN-CHAN*, for example, was sold in Hong Kong a full month before the actual Hong Kong edition could be printed.

But while the collapse of Jademan may have brought about a revolution in legal editions of Japanese works, it has also ushered in a new age of Hong Kong originals. There are now five major comic publishers in the territory. Three were formed by ex-employees of Jademan, while Wong himself has responded with Wong Dynasty. The other company is Kwong's, a family firm of reformed bootleggers who have since moved from manga piracy to concentrating on original material. Their most successful title is *BRUCE LEE*, which is still going strong after twelve years and more than 800 issues. But while Kwong's and Wong Dynasty remain trapped in the past, quaintly rehashing the martial arts thuggery of earlier generations, the great achievements in modern Hong Kong comics have come from the newer companies. The artists and writers may have



**PAGE #20:** Top Left: Cheap and cheerful fun in Culture World's cash-in on Capcom's *NIGHT WARRIORS* (AKA: *VAMPIRE HUNTER/ NIGHT STALKERS*) Bottom Left: Fantasy archetypes do battle in the very un-chinese *CELIA*. Top right: The tell tale seal of Tony Wong on the cover of *A MAN OF HONOUR* shows that the original 'Jademan' hasn't lost his touch. But this comic repeats the mistakes of the *First Wave* failures: nice cover, shame about the contents, especially since its more boring old kung -fu sword-and-sorcery Bottom right: What you see is what you get, with *TWO PEOPLE ON A BED* from Sui Sun's King's Fountain Press. The second Wave of Hong Kong comics is considerably more risqué than its predecessor.

CAPCOM 正式授權中文版

THE NIGHT WARRIORS

15 編繪・柴奇 創作・文敵 吳家強

\$12.00 天地異變・魔界爭雄

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十六年前，手槍槍響，

捍衛正義……

learned their trade with Tony Wong, but they have gone on to surpass his achievements, especially in the international sphere.

Ma Win Sing, who drew BLOOD SWORD for Jademan, enjoyed considerable fame across the rest of Asia, and left the company to form the Tin Ha (Under Heaven) publishers. As well as the ongoing UNDER HEAVEN series, Ma produced the science fantasy epic GOD MACHINE, and their most popular title WIND AND CLOUD. Tin Ha did so well out of the biweekly schedule and subsequent reissue in compilation form of WIND AND CLOUD, that the company was able to branch out into subtitled anime with the Chinese version of FINAL FANTASY. The role of animation in selling related comics was well appreciated by Tin Ha, and the company now holds the Hong Kong licences for many Japanese works, including SAILOR MOON, BATTLE ANGEL ALITA, SAINT SEYA, 3X3 EYES, OH MY GODDESS and DNA<sup>2</sup>.

The most famous exiles from Jademan are the Freeman collective, four artists and writers who left Wong's company when things started to get rough in 1988. Freeman wanted to dispel once and for all the trashy image which Hong Kong comics endured around the rest of Asia, especially when compared to their Japanese counterparts. The Freeman artists deliberately sought to imitate the Japanese graphic style, and often mixed their standard drawings with methods borrowed from animation, occasionally with the use of cel superimposition to give their art a distinctive 'feel'. They were also the first in Hong Kong to use airbrushes and computer colouring extensively. Freeman's most successful creation to date is CYBER WEAPON Z (review in AFX #9), drawn by Andy Seto from a script by Chris Lau. It shares a sense of Chinese tradition with the 'first wave' of Hong Kong comics, managing to incorporate Shaolin kung-fu, but that's where the resemblance ends. Chris Lau is committed to science fiction, and CYBER WEAPON Z's Shaolin Temple is a futuristic precinct where martial artists hone their brains and bodies in an attempt to create the next master race. Unlike many other Hong Kong comics publishers, who are more than happy to dismiss a scripting credit with the words 'by committee', the presence of Lau on Freeman's board of directors ensures that plot is a major consideration. CYBER WEAPON Z isn't just beautifully-drawn, but it has a marvellous melange of plots and subplots, and this is one of the factors that has contributed towards its huge success in Hong Kong. Lau also scripts most of



Freeman's other titles. CELIA (drawn by Patrick Yu) is a classic heroic fantasy, based upon a role-playing game. It pits a typical D&D-style party against the forces of evil in an alternate world that looks almost, but not quite, entirely unlike Georgian England. Lau returns to his favourite genre of SF with CLUB MAD OF KILLER (drawn by Lam Wai Hong), a cyberpunk fable set in a futuristic city in which two brothers find themselves on opposite sides of the law. The plot was originally written as a film script, which failed to secure the necessary financial backing. Drawing plot elements from Ryoichi Ikegami's popular manga SANCTUARY, one brother becomes a respected police officer, while the other becomes the most dangerous hitman of the city's biggest criminal organisation. The twist comes in Lau's right-wing take on their motivations; both believe themselves to be working towards a better world, even though their methods may be in opposition.

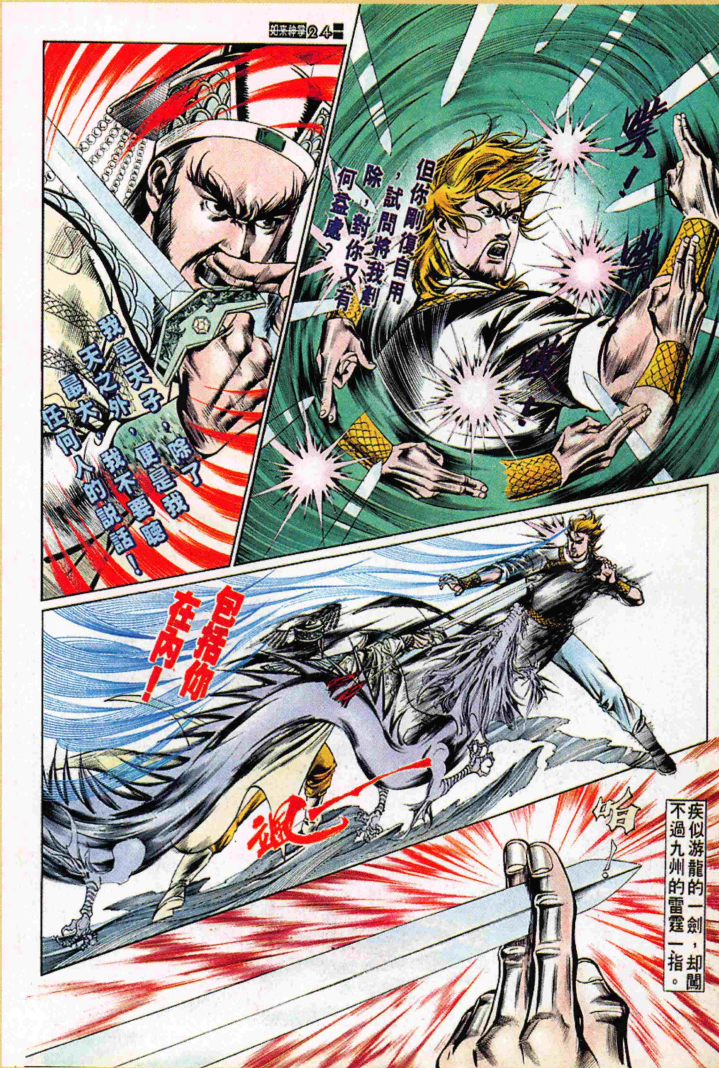
Another good example of Lau's work is BORN TO KILL, (drawn by Kevin Lau). BORN TO KILL takes the internationalisation of comics a step further, drawing its inspiration not only from manga, but also from the Japanese style of America's Image Comics and the more recent additions to Marvel's X-MEN canon. BORN TO KILL posits a world divided into four alternate dimensions, in which the Supreme Goddess of Heaven appoints a trio of elite warriors to ensure that Harmony is maintained. Travelling through the differing terrains (and art styles...) of the dimensions, our heroes

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兩個人在床上

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Above: **FIRST WAVE: A Jademans 'Classic', FORCE OF BUDDHA'S PALM**  
 Below: **NIGHT WARRIORS**

Titian, Candy and Dagger must make sure that the dimensions of Heaven and Earth never fall prey to invasions from the dimensions of Dreams and Machines.

These are but a few of the great new-wave comics coming out of Hong Kong at the moment. Not quite manga, but not quite Marvel slugfests either, the Hong Kong industry is one to watch, especially as 1997 drifts ever closer and the Asian world holds its breath. When the new, red flag of the Xiang Gang Autonomous Region eventually goes up over the island in July 1997, it may herald the end of a promising new business, a mass exodus of talent into other Asian (or even European) markets, or the opening up of a huge new market for Hong Kong comics on the Chinese mainland itself. Whatever happens, the odds remained stacked in Hong Kong's favour, and AFX readers can expect to hear a lot more from this region in the years to come.

**SOURCES**

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Lent, J.A. (1995) 'Manga & Anime in Asia', in Anime FX #3, pp.8-10.





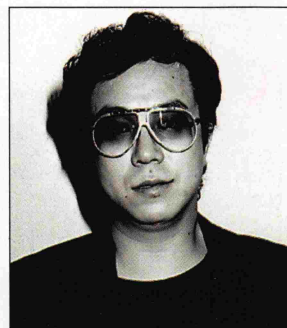
# RAVEN TENGU KABUTO



by **JULIA SERTORI** and **HELEN McCARTHY**

## THE LITE FANTASTIC: BUICHI TERASAWA'S KABUTO

*With Manga Entertainment releasing KABUTO this month, we thought it was about time we took a long look, both at this OAV and the KABUTO TV series to which it is related. Intrepid reporter Julia Sertori was locked in a room with the Manga release, the subtitled version, aka KABUTO: THE GOLDEN-EYED BEAST in Japan, and the two-part TV special KABUTO: THE VISITATION and told not to come out until she understood the mysteries of the Terasawa universe...*



Born in 1955, Buichi Terasawa is a native of Japan's northernmost isle of Hokkaido. It's worth noting that Hokkaido is a relatively recent addition to the Japanese nation, and was inhabited by a completely different race during the medieval period. The fact that Hokkaido exists as a separate entity from much of Japanese history may have been a distinct influence on the way in which Terasawa approaches 'historical' material like the KABUTO series. However, his first work was in science fiction. *SPACE ADVENTURE COBRA* (1977) gave us a galactic criminal as a hero, albeit a rather good-natured one bearing in mind that he is allegedly the most notorious pirate in the universe. It was followed in 1988 by *MIDNIGHT EYE GOKU*, a manga which transplanted the Chinese Monkey King Sun Wukong to a setting of 21st century corporate espionage.

After *GOKU*, Terasawa rejected the science fiction medium in 1990, and turned to fantasy with *BLACK KNIGHT BAT*. Terasawa's working methods, which value 'style over substance' are much better suited to a fantasy model; imagination can run riot, and one is never plagued by annoying requests to explain anything beyond the use of the simple words 'it's magic'. *BLACK KNIGHT BAT* mixes elements of Lewis Carroll with John Carpenter to form a tale of a magical underworld in which our eponymous heroine leads a group of bestial warriors. Terasawa stayed with fantasy for his next creation, *KABUTO*.

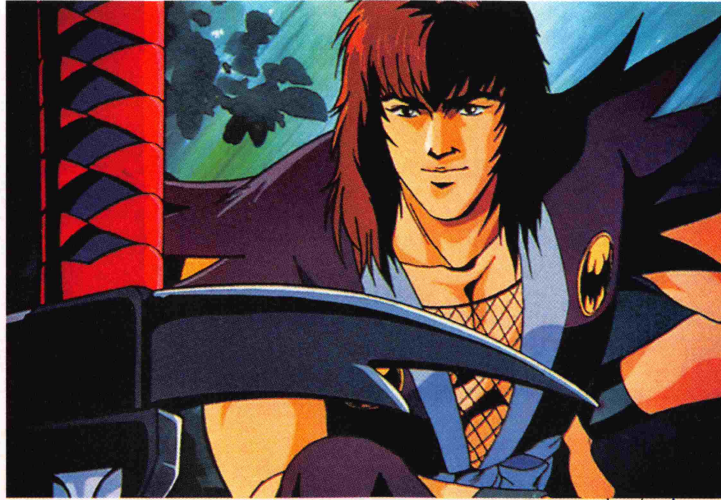
**KABUTO: THE GOLDEN-EYED BEAST** begins like Kurosawa's *YOJIMBO*. The man-with-no-name

arrives in a ghost town, and finds it under the influence of an oppressive tyrant. The fantastic then starts to take hold, with the tyrant revealed as the evil sorceress Tamamushi with control over a menagerie of robotic creatures. Matters then slip into the standard can-he-save-the-princess? routine in a formulaic fantasy tale. Kabuto, you see, is Raven Tengu Kabuto, a warrior-mage with the power of flight, magical runes and a deadly blade. What's more, he promised the beautiful princess Ran many years ago that he would always look after her, and when she is kidnapped by Tamamushi, he is honour-bound to fight the forces of chaos.

In comparison, *KABUTO: THE VISITATION* bears a greater resemblance to *THE SEVEN SAMURAI*, although, er... they're not samurai and there's only five of them. Dohki, the ruler of hell, finds himself summoned to Terasawa's dreamtime Japan by the 'evil mood of the age', and proceeds to try and rule the universe with the help of his cronies. Kabuto assembles a party of stock characters (a giant warrior, a loyal samurai, a cunning rogue and the usual token blonde) in order to fight Dohki. This he does by rounding up the old members of his clan, who have been scattered to the four corners of Japan by an undisclosed disaster. It's an unashamed Kurosawa rip-off, but then again, so was *THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN*. Dohki in turn has assembled a group of baddies that represent the 'dark halves' of Kabuto's little band, and the battle begins. This takes a good couple of hours of screen-time and is a standard, by-the-numbers fantasy epic.

I'm choosing the word 'fantasy' very carefully, because it's important that AFX readers don't mistake *KABUTO* for science fiction. Whereas similar works such as *NINJA SCROLL*, *YOTODEN* and *THE LEGEND OF KAMUI* are all rooted in some sense of historical conjecture, *KABUTO* is fantasy, pure and simple.

Historical fiction is assembled just like a science fiction story. You ask the question 'what if...' and proceed from there. What if Cleopatra dictated her memoirs before she died? What if Richard III won the Battle of Bosworth Field? What if Japan had never bombed Pearl Harbour? The 'science' comes in the writer's grasp of their chosen period. Did people wear digital watches in ancient



*KABUTO* and his magic blade *HIRYU*, which can fly and cut objects without touching them



Greece? Did people eat potatoes in medieval England? Did the Vietcong use cruise missiles? And so on. Where knowledge is lacking, we get a costume drama, which goes through the motions without the realism of language, events or attitudes. Where the errors outweigh the truths, the writer's only defence is that the work is not historical in any sense, which makes it unadulterated fantasy.

In *NINJA SCROLL*, the script asks the question: 'What if all the stories about ninja and their magical powers were true?' In *YOTODEN*, this is taken one step further with the addition of '...What if Oda Nobunaga united Japan with demons instead of firearms?' However, the underlying rationale for *KABUTO* seems to be: 'What if we just get everything we can think of and sling it together?' This makes it fantasy, because no historical setting can be successfully applied.

Every part of *KABUTO* contains objects and events of doubtful provenance. It's an anime that seems permanently unsure of whether it wants to be science fiction or science fantasy, steam-punk thriller or high adventure. The majority of the oversights are faults in the design department. Hiryu is a double-edged blade, yet

Kabuto wields it like a single-edged katana. Any sense of period is compromised by the heavy-rock guitar music throughout. The characters' language switches from ancient idiom ('verily thou art a knave') to modern vernacular ('outta my way, bitch') and back again faster than you can say 'anachronism'. Tamamushi is dressed and accoutred like a princess of the Early Fujiwara Period (897-1086 AD), yet characters are seen firing muskets that were not introduced into Japan until 1542. Background scenery switches from that of northern Japan to that of southern China and then back again... the overall effect is of a cartoon made in the West by a creator whose knowledge of the Orient is restricted to the Ladybird Book of Legends and a single reading of a children's history book. And

Princess RAN is renamed RANAME in the Manga Video version for lip-sync purposes



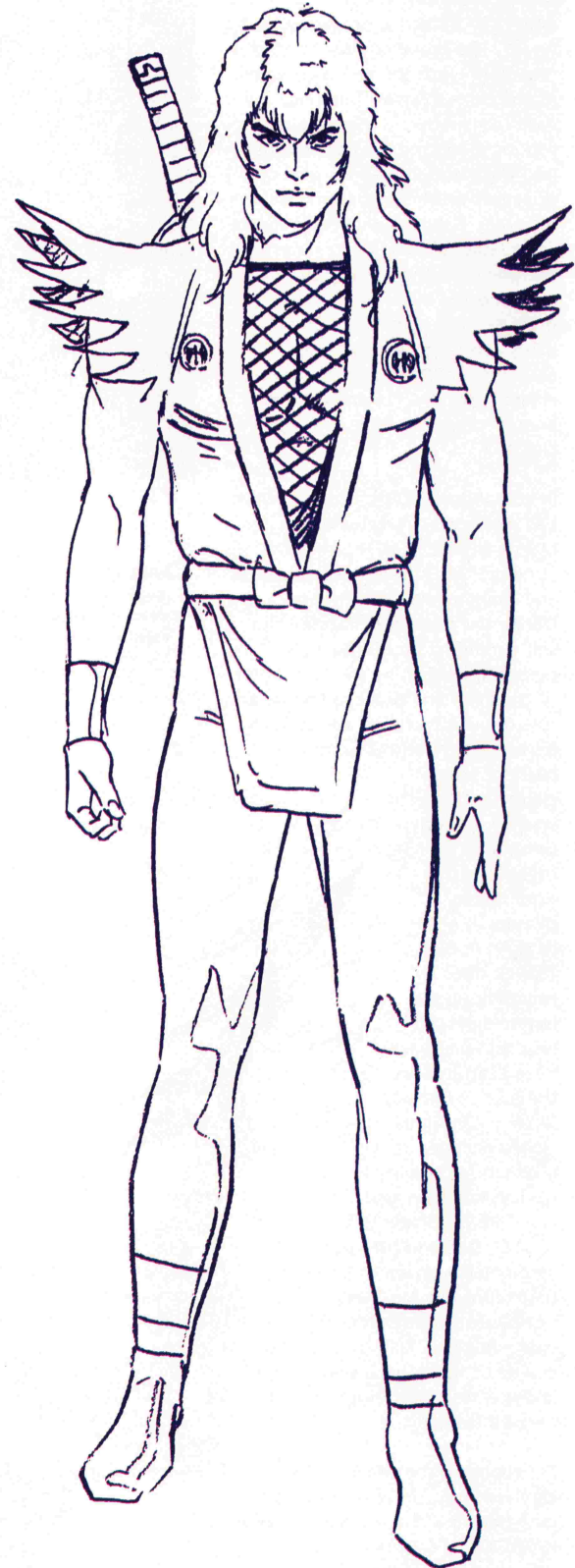
**KABUTO**

there lies the rub, because Buichi Terasawa is Japanese, but his 'samurai' drama is pure fantasy, like Kevin Costner's ROBIN HOOD: PRINCE OF THIEVES before it, it neither pretends nor attempts to remain true to historical or geographical fact. Once again, Terasawa is an offender in good company. It was, after all, Shakespeare who included chiming clocks in Julius Caesar, cannons in Macbeth and a rapier-wielding knight in Henry V. Anachronisms don't necessarily detract from a tale, they merely make it unacceptable as a historical document.

Nevertheless, Terasawa's grab-bag of myths contains a great number of interesting references to Japanese history and legend, albeit taken out of context. The 'face-hugging' kurokumo ('black-spiders') are an arachnid take on the Heike crabs, real-life creatures from Japan's Inner Sea whose shells bear shockingly-accurate pictures of samurai-warriors' faces. These creatures are said to be the reincarnations of the soldiers who lost Japan's Civil War. Whenever a fisherman catches one, he throws it back out of respect to the dead, and since having a samurai-face on one's shell has become a survival trait among Heike crabs, three hundred years of unnatural selection has created unbelievably-realistic designs.

Kabuto is a tengu warrior, although whether this is a reference to the supernatural 'crow-demons' of legend or merely a particular martial school is unclear. Kabuto himself claims the latter, in which case will someone please tell me where he got his wings from? Episodes of the TV series include appearances by the notorious Fuma clan, already known in the UK from their role in LUPIN III: THE FUMA CONSPIRACY, and in France for KOJIRO. Kabuto's giant naginata-wielding companion Genbu is a tip of the hat to the Little John of Japanese legend, the super-monk Benkei.

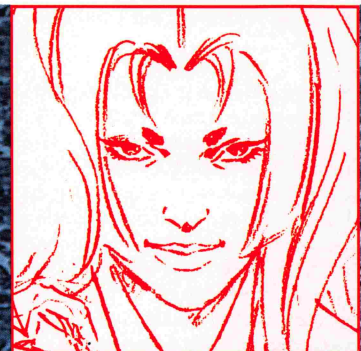
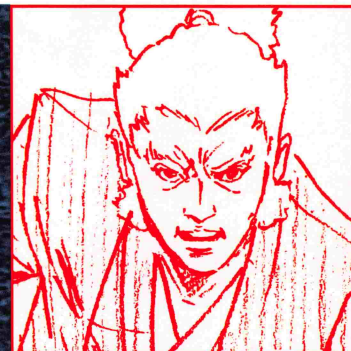
The machines themselves are dragged in without much thought as to the likelihood of whether they would work. Tamamushi's 'helicopter' hut has no stabilising rotor,



**KAZUMA**

**PRINCESS RAN**

**TAMAMUSHI**





and thus wouldn't function. Unlike the giant robots in **KISHIN HEIDAN**, which have been painstakingly-constructed with 1930s technology in mind (with the handy get-out clause of alien power modules), Terasawa's gadgets never come supplied with explanations of their means of operation. The evil Tamamushi turns out to be a machine herself, which begs the question, if she really is an android, why does she need to sacrifice the souls of young women to keep herself young? I personally find these kinks in the plot infuriating. A good continuity editor, armed only with a pencil, could have turned the **KABUTO** script into a sterling, airtight drama in a matter of minutes, with the odd crossing out here, or a bit of explanation there. It's still enjoyable, that I'll admit, but it could have been so much more...

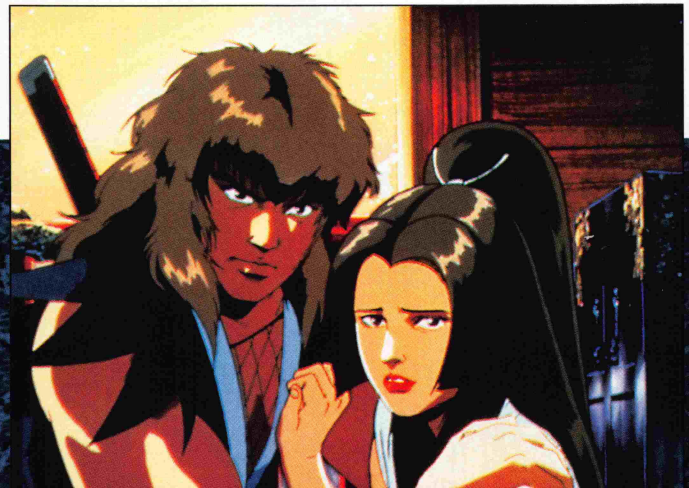
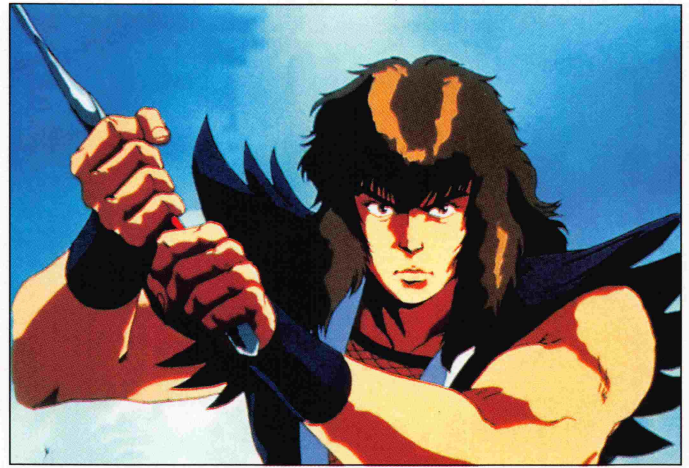
**KABUTO: THE VISITATION** has fewer unrealistic incidences to worry about, although there are still too many for my taste. Suzaku, Kabuto's love interest, wears fishnet tights for no discernible reason, someone uses a semi-automatic musket, and characters can speak and breathe underwater without any effort or explanation. But the fantasy is so over-the-top, that no-one would ever mistake it for an attempt at historical realism. Instead it's a great knockabout good-vs-evil tale, with Terasawa's trademark steampunk machinery (including a swastika-shaped dragon-spaceship) and swashbuckling action. It's also better-animated than **GOLDEN-EYED BEAST**, and features design and animation work from **PLASTIC LITTLE**'s Satoshi Urushibara and Kinji Yoshimoto. Whereas **GOLDEN-EYED BEAST** has some gut-wrenchingly amateurish shots, little sense of parallax, and cuts corners with impunity, **THE VISITATION** makes plenty of concessions to realism in its use of moving backgrounds, if not in plotting and design. It might have been a better **KABUTO** title for Manga Entertainment to lead with, but who knows, perhaps it's already in the pipeline.

Kabuto is a hero cut in the traditional Terasawa cloth. Equally at

home alone or in a team, he also possesses superhuman powers. In Kabuto's case, he can fly as well, but he shares with the later Terasawa hero **RED-BRAND TAKERU** a control of the magic powers of kanji, the characters with which Japanese is written. Like Takeru, he can assemble them like runes to release psychic energy, which puts him on a level footing with the baddies he opposes.

As Terasawa has admitted himself, he regards his characters as 'actors' who can be switched from story to story, and it comes as no surprise that his protagonists' women in particular are virtually unchanged from story to story. The character of Suzaku in **THE VISITATION**, for example, is an exact double of **SPACE ADVENTURE COBRA**'s Jane Flower, the eponymous **BLACK KNIGHT BAT** and **RED-BRAND TAKERU**'s Heian. Although their tight-fitting clothes are different, their bodies, hairstyles and features are transplanted wholesale from one tale to the next. Well-known in Japan for luscious attention to detail while drawing the female form, Terasawa depicts his women with the same regard to looks and disregard of characterisation as the 'Bond girls' of the 007 movies. There are only two kinds of Terasawa women: the virgins who are tormented and (if they are very good girls) rescued, and the whores who are rejected and (if they are very bad girls) fight on the side of evil.

Another trait Terasawa shares with the Bond films is the fetishisation of weaponry and male potency. Characters come equipped with big guns, big clubs or big swords. In Terasawa's Space Girl commercial for Matsushita Kosan (1988) the Jane Flower character makes another appearance, this time with a big electric guitar. The ultimate fetish, however, comes in the form of Terasawa's first, and (in my humble opinion) best character, **COBRA**, who has gone so far as to sacrifice one his limbs: his arm has been replaced with the devastating Psychogun, which must make it very difficult for him to use a knife and fork.



**JINNAI**

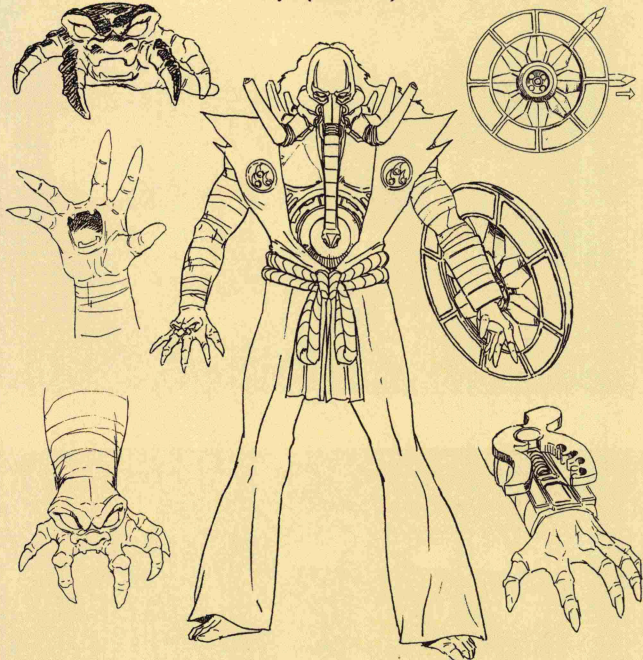


**RASETSUBO**





**RASETSUBO** : his right hand *raijin* (Thunder God) fires a power beam from its "mouth", on his left arm is the flying wheel *Fujin* (Wind God)

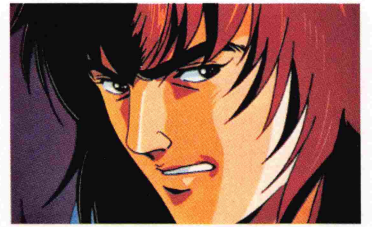


In my mind, COBRA's most powerful feature isn't his phallic symbolism or his army of willing nymphettes (although I'm sure that represents much of his appeal to a lot of fans) but rather the fabulous plot device that begins the manga. Our hero is an everyday Joe, who goes to a 'virtual holiday' centre and dreams that he is a space pirate. He wakes up to discover that he really is a space pirate, and that the 'virtual holiday' was the real story, just one that he had suppressed in his memory. Predating TOTAL RECALL by a decade, although possibly inspired by Philip K. Dick's original short story, this device is an excellent way of kicking off, and a very clever method for covering any indiscrepancies. Just like in TOTAL RECALL, the audience have no way of telling where the waking-dream begins. For all we know, the entire story of COBRA could indeed be the 'virtual holiday', and that any unlikely happenings or admixtures of conflicting genres could be the product of the character's dreams, rather than a hole in the script.

With such an opening, the plotting of COBRA can get away with murder because you're always wondering if Cobra isn't going to wake up in a couple of seconds and say: 'it was only a dream...' But the KABUTO series doesn't present the audience with the option, it's just there in front of you, and you have to provide your own rationale for the suspension of disbelief. If you can do that, and you're happy to watch a view of the Orient that, frankly, is only acceptable because Terasawa is Oriental himself and thus has the perfect right to alter his environment to suit his fantasies, then KABUTO is a worthwhile addition to any collection that already includes

COBRA, NINJA SCROLL or the unhistorical, gloriously eclectic mix of eras that is ZEGUY.

**JULIA SERTORI**



### KABUTO BACKGROUND

RAVEN TENGU KABUTO was first broadcast on Japan's state-owned satellite channel NHK in 1990, planned as a 39-episode TV series based on the manga of the same name by Buichi Terasawa. In the summer of 1992 the OAV subtitled THE GOLDEN-EYED BEAST made its Japanese debut from KSS; just weeks later it was also shown in California, in a specially-prepared English subtitled version, at ANIME EXPO and the San Diego Comic Convention. Now it's available (Dubbed) in the UK and USA from Manga Entertainment.

### MAJOR CHARACTERS

#### KABUTO

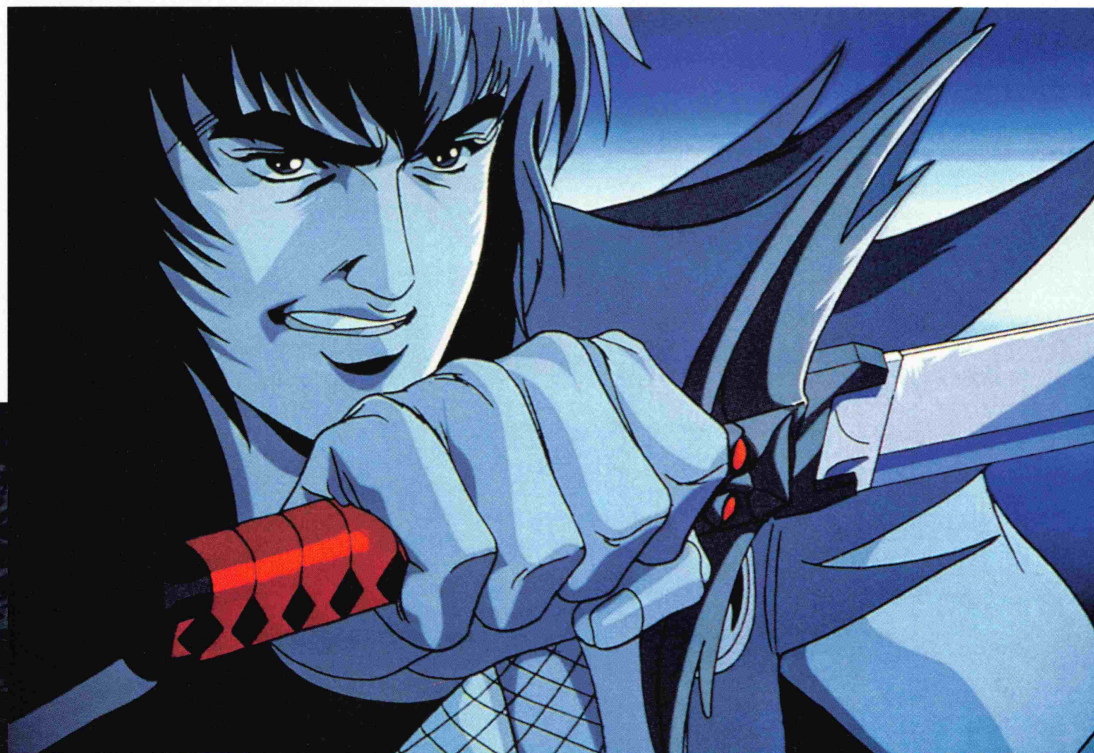
A student of the sword since his childhood, Kabuto is now a sword-master and has mastered many other mystical skills, including the power of flight. He has a magic blade called Hiryu, said to be able to cut from 5 inches away without even touching an object. A tall, blond young man of 24 years old, with intense golden eyes, he is also very loyal and always keeps his promises.

#### PRINCESS RAN

Daughter of the old Lord of Sado, she first met Kabuto ten years ago, when she was 19. She's a brave and beautiful but inexperienced girl currently imprisoned by the evil forces who have taken control of her lands.

#### KAZUMA YAMAGAMI

A brave follower of the old Lord and no mean swordsman himself, Kazuma too knew Kabuto ten years ago when he was a teenager. He tries to rescue the Princess and



smuggle her to safety, but the two are recaptured and only the intervention of Kabuto and students from his dojo saves him from execution for 'kidnapping'.

**TAMAMUSHI**

A sorceress who has set herself up as ruler of Sado after siezing the castle from the rightful heiress, Princess Ran, after the mysterious death of her father. She uses black arts to preserve her beauty and defeat her enemies. However she turns out to be no more than a machine herself, controlled by Jinnai as a cover for his own dark ambitions.

**KARAKURI JINNAI**

Described as 'Gadget Master' to Tamamushi, the monkey-faced Karakuri ('Gadget') Jinnai is in fact the power behind the throne, creator of the witch herself as well as her deadly toys. His creations include the spiderlike, face-hugging Kimenchu and the flying castle in which the pair try to make their escape at the end of the OAV.

**RASETSUBO**

A monstrous 'elephant man', he too is a doll, but his attacks are no less deadly for that. His weapons include *fujin* (Wind God) and *raijin* (Thunder God).

**STORY**

Kabuto returns to the land of Sado, where he once spent six months studying swordsmanship as a boy. He finds the town's goldmines still thriving but the town itself seemingly dying, with food shortages and people afraid to appear on the streets lest they be dragged off as slaves to the mines. The old Lord has died and his place has been taken not by his daughter but by a strange sorceress and her henchmen. They create mysterious gadgets and weapons with terrifying powers.

That night Kazuma Yamagami tries to rescue the Princess and get her to safety; when they are attacked by Tamamushi's monstrous servants, Kabuto intervenes to save them, and they both remember the boy they knew ten years ago; but while he fights the Kimenchu (aka "Black Spiders"), deadly spiderlike creatures with smiling masks for

**Kimenchu: "Demon-Mask Insects". They control the BLACK SPIDER guards (Right)**



bodies, they are recaptured. He faces Rasetsubo and is victorious, but the warrior is an automaton and contains a self-destruct device set to explode; only Kabuto's wings save him. He arrives at the castle just in time to save Kazuma from sentence of death and seek the Princess. Despite Tamamushi's sorcery he finds her, and the memory of their long-ago meeting and Kabuto's promise to her helps her to reject the witch's spell. "I promise I will always come to save you ... for you I would throw my life away".

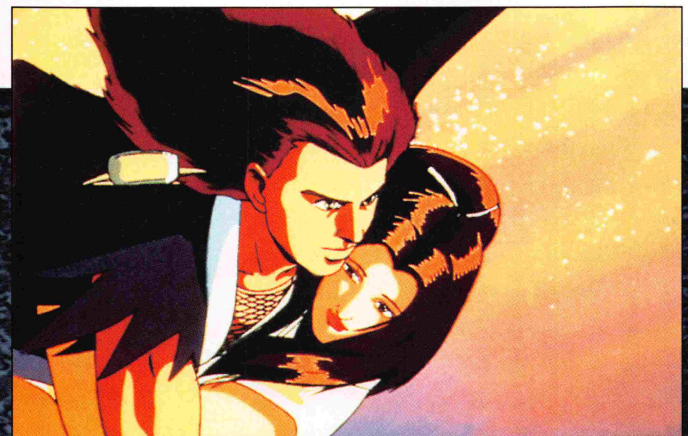
By this time the upper part of the castle is already in flight as the sorcerers try to make good their escape. After Kabuto defeats Tamamushi and finds she is merely a doll, he discovers a self-destruct mechanism just like that inside Rasetsubo; once again, his wings save him and his Princess. Jinnai, however, is less fortunate and the castle explodes in midair, taking him and his creations with it. But Kabuto and the Princess are safe; he has kept his promise to her.



**HELEN MCCARTHY**



**"Gadget Master" Jinnai**



**STAFF**

Original story/Screenplay/Director..... **Buichi Terasawa**  
 Director ..... **Yoshitaka Fujimoto**  
 Director of Art ..... **Hisashi Hirai**  
 Music ..... **Naritsugu Nagaoka**  
 Art Director..... **Takeshi Waki**  
 Music Effects Director..... **Hiroyuki Hayase**  
 Photography Director..... **Mitsunobu Yoshida**  
 Executvie Producer..... **Kazuo Suzaki**  
 General Producers..... **Haruo Ishizume, Takumi Ogawa**  
 Producers..... **Junco Ito, Kenji Toyoda, Koji Iwakawa, Kuzo Nakamura**  
 Theme song lyrics by ..... **Buichi Terasawa.**



# SPACE ADVENTURE COBRA



## BACKGROUND

SPACE ADVENTURE COBRA the manga commenced publication in 1977 in Shueisha's SHONEN JUMP magazine, and ran more or less continuously for seven years, with sales of more than 10 million copies of its first 12 volumes. An English translation from Viz followed in 1990, and though Terasawa has gone on record as saying he wasn't very pleased with the result (ANIMELAND #10, 1993) he also acknowledges that this adaptation is what made him known outside Japan. The enduring popularity of the character in his native land is demonstrated by Terasawa's return to the COBRA universe for his two latest works, the manga and movie versions of COBRA: THE PSY-CHOGUN. The manga is currently running in Shueisha's fortnightly SUPER JUMP and the movie follows

it closely.

The original manga made the crossover into a 99-minute theatrical feature film and a 31-episode TV series in 1982, both produced by Tokyo Movie Shinsha and directed by Osamu Dezaki of GOLGO 13: THE PROFESSIONAL fame, though on the series he was assisted by co-director Takeuchi. It's the movie which Manga Video have released as a 90 minute video. So far no-one has attempted to pick up the TV series for translation into English; however, French video company AK Video are releasing the whole series in a new remastered edition, subtitled in French. (Boutique Toon offers these and other tapes by mail order - contact them at BP 249, 9412 Saint-Maur Cedex, France.)

## THE BEGINNING

Terasawa acknowledges the inspiration of STAR WARS and James Bond movies, and there's a strong element of the traditional Western in COBRA, but he was considerably ahead of TOTAL RECALL in his initial manga premise. Based on elements of the manga, the story of the series and movie is set in the 24th century, in a future universe where nothing much has changed. Corrupt politicians are still on the payroll of various vested interests and crime syndicates, graft and

greed are the order of the day & power is an excuse for most things. A young man goes into a 'dream palace' and slips into the persona of space pirate Cobra for a 'vacation', then discovers gradually that he really is Cobra, but had been given a new identity and had his memories suppressed to escape his enemies, in the hope that by going to ground for a couple of years he could avoid the

trouble he'd got into by upsetting the powerful galactic crime syndicate known as the Pirate Guild. When some of his old adversaries turn up to take their delayed revenge, he plans to deal with them, then leave Earth in search of some peace and quiet.

## THE MOVIE - SYNOPSIS

The movie takes the early part of this premise as read; Cobra is on another planet, in the Seventh Galaxy, where he runs into Jane, a beautiful and determined bounty hunter. When she finally gets confirmation of his secret identity by chance (she discounts it at first because he used to have long dark hair and looked completely different) she's already prepared to fall in love with him, because, as one of the three Queens of the artificial planet Miras, she draws her power from



**THREE TIMES A LADY**  
COBRA's sexy 'ARMOROID' assistant, LADY was renamed ANDROMEDA in the Manga Video dub and before that was renamed GALAXIA in Tokyo Movie Shinsha's English language promotional leaflet

love. She has to find a man she can love, be reunited with her two sisters, and use the power released by their love to save the galaxy. Unfortunately there are a few obstacles. One of her sisters, Katherine, has been captured by Crystal Boy, the local head of the Pirates Guild, and thrown into the floating prison of Sido. Crystal Boy is out to destroy the galaxy so that it can be reborn entirely under the Guild's - and his - control. He calls it a 'mission from God', but like most such missions it's going to work out rather nicely for him, too. He has the willing co-operation of his 'prisoner', Katherine, who is in fact his lover and who aims to kill her sisters and become sole Queen of Miras so that his plans can succeed. Their intention is to direct the planet into the Seventh Galaxy's sun. After Katherine kills Jane, Cobra (guided by Professor Topora) seeks out the third sister, Dominique, to try and stop Crystal Boy's plot; but he isn't prepared for the fact that she intends to be his lover as well!

The Manga Video translation has Crystal Boy as Lord Necron, a death-fetishist seeking to wipe out the galaxy so that he can rule over an Empire of the Dead, and the Pirates Guild as the Galactic Guild; some of the names have been

changed but the story runs along the same lines. The original soundtrack, however, has been replaced for the UK release by music from Europop band Yello.

### THE MOVIE - MAIN CHARACTERS



#### COBRA

His left forearm has been replaced by the Psychogun, which can channel his life force into a powerful energy beam weapon, and his cigar seems to be almost as immovably

attached to his lower lip. A blond and beefy rough diamond (reminiscent in some ways of Willie Garvin without Modesty Blaise), Cobra is a charismatic, attention-grabbing guy; he always wears red, which is both a lucky and a very conspicuous colour! His cynicism, energy and carefree attitude seem to appeal to the ladies; his idea of a joke can be very strange - for example, he garages his ship, the Turtle, in a secret hangar the entrance to which is via his own grave.. Under this cavalier exterior he's one of the fastest and toughest men in the galaxy, with incredibly quick reflexes and mastery of many martial arts. He loves women and good liquor.

#### LADY / ANDROMEDA

Cobra's 'armoroid' sidekick, an elegant mechanised creature whose loyalty and capability have saved her partner's hide on many occasions. She pilots his spaceship, the Turtle, which has a number of powerful weapons and unexpected configura-

tions, & is also very handy with a wide range of weaponry herself. It's not known how the two got together.



#### CRYSTAL BOY / LORD NECRON

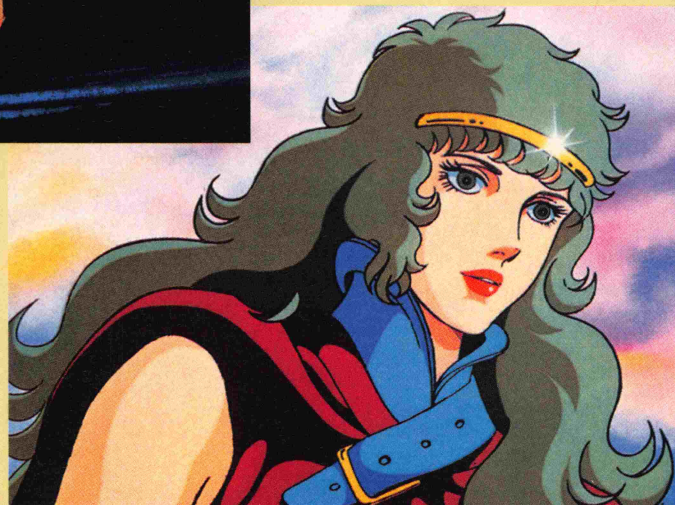
His entire body is cyborg, encased in a super-tough protective crystalline skin, immune to lasers and bullets, and he can access massive firepower from within his structure. Unfortunately for Cobra he is also immune to the Psychogun until his crystal shell can be pierced.. A feared Guild assassin as well as a commander, he leads a formidable band of cut-throats.

#### JANE FLOWER

She's one of three sisters who are rulers of the drifting planet Miras, currently working as a bounty hunter. When she runs across Cobra quite by accident on one of her jobs, it's not long before he and Andromeda find themselves helping her, aiming to reunite her with her sisters and save Miras from being used as a super-weapon to destroy the galaxy. She's beautiful, cool and determined.

#### KATHERINE FLOWER

The second of the trio and Crystal Boy/Necron's lover, she refuses her destiny, which is to share Jane's love of Cobra, and kills her sister to further her own lover's ambitions. In the end, realising what she has



#### FLOWER POWER!

The three Flower Sisters  
Above Left: DOMINIQUE  
Above: JANE  
Right: CATHERINE

done, she destroys Miros as the only way to prevent the destruction of the galaxy.

#### DOMINIQUE FLOWER

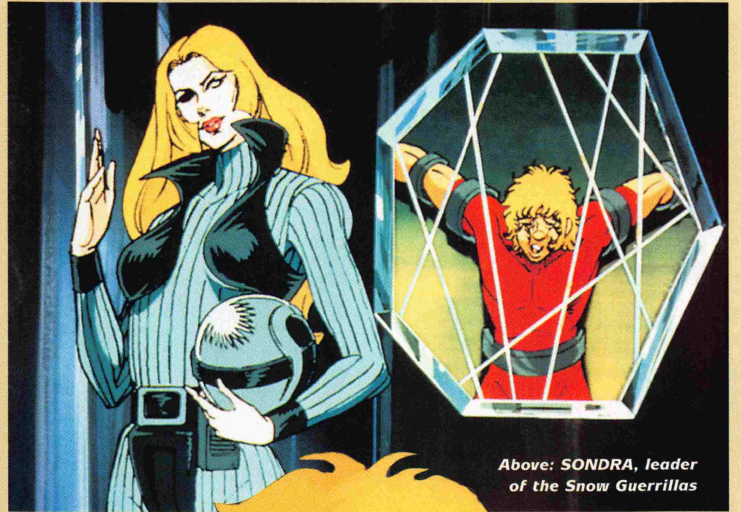
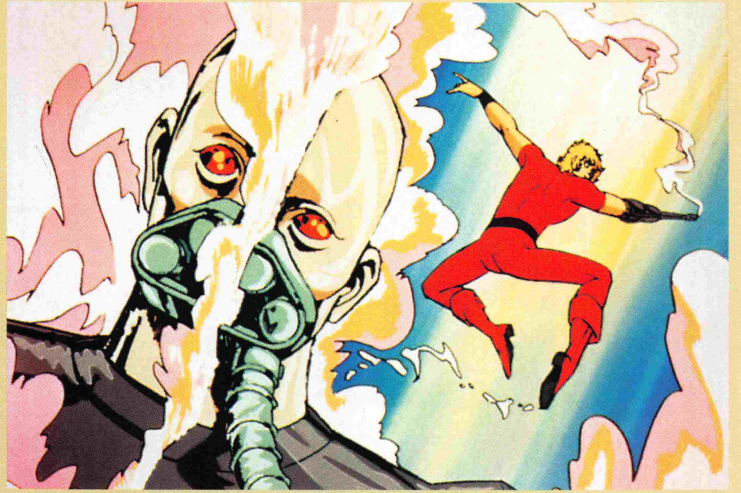
The third of the sisters, in hiding among the Snow Guerrillas on planet Rouge, she is happy to accept Jane's choice and persuades an at first reluctant Cobra that loving her is not a betrayal of Jane, but simply a continuation of Jane's love for him. She is killed by Crystal Boy.

#### SONDRA

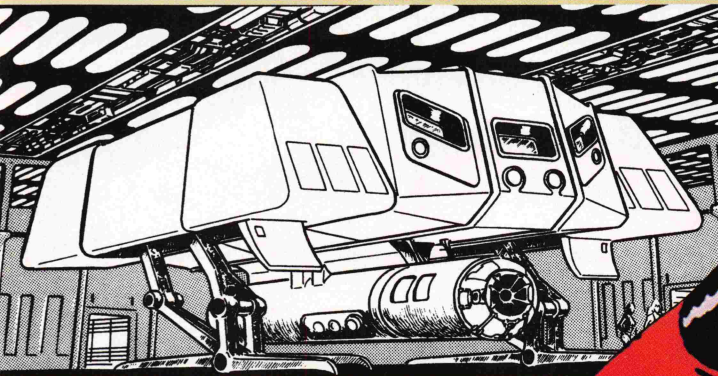
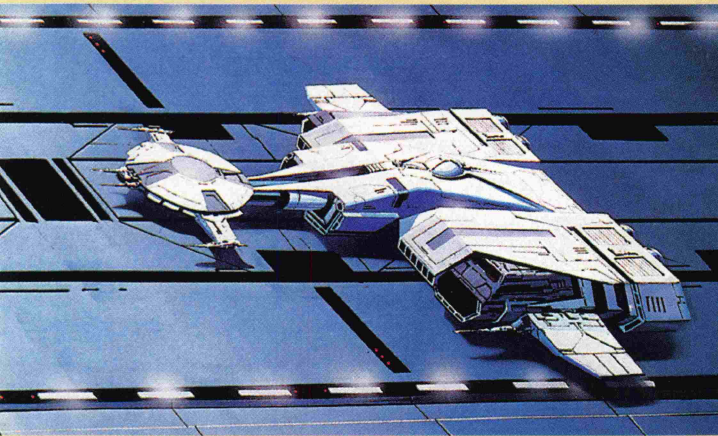
Leader of the Snow Guerrillas on ice planet Rouge, she is seeking to liberate the planet from Guild domination, though she has no love for the forces of law and order in the shape of the Galactic Patrol. She lost her right eye in the struggle to free her people.

#### PROFESSOR TOPORA

Appearing as an elderly telepath enclosed in a life-support bubble, he is really a projection from a super-computer, responsible for looking after the three sisters and guiding them to fulfil their destiny. He and the three are all in telepathic communication.



Above: SONDRA, leader of the Snow Guerrillas

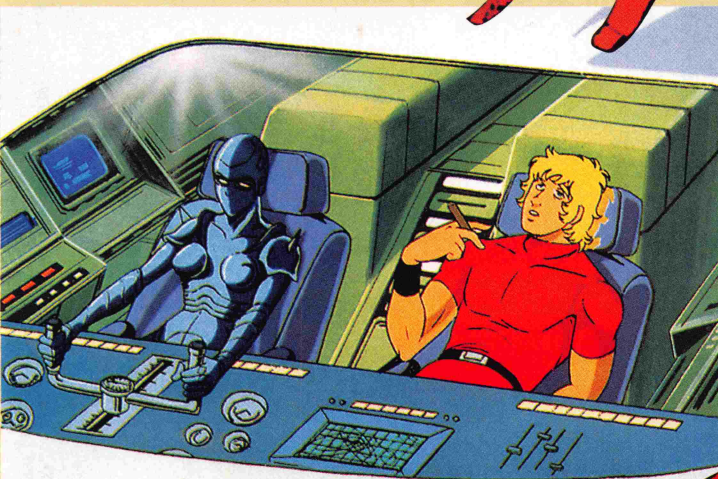


COBRA's ship: THE TURTLE.

Top the anime version.

Above: The manga version

Below: COBRA and LADY at the controls





### THE MOVIE - STAFF

Director **Osamu Dezaki**  
 Script **Buichi Terasawa and Haruya Yamazaki**  
 Original story **Buichi Terasawa**  
 Animation director **Akio Sugino**  
 Art director **Shichiro Kobayashi**  
 Production co.  
**Tokyo Movie Shinsha Co. Ltd.**

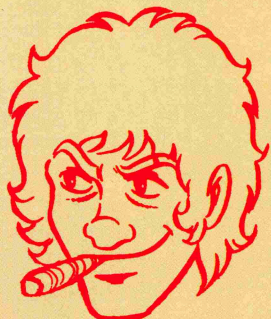
### THE FUTURE...

COBRA: THE PSYCHOGUN takes our loveable rogue into new adventures. Once again acknowledging Western movie influences - see if you can guess which movies this time! - Cobra and his latest love, the feisty archaeologist Utopia More, are on Mars to seek the origins of the universe by 'ring-bark' dating the shells of the planet's almost-extinct Fossil Worms. But archaeological data like this has for some mysterious reason become valuable to less scholarly souls too, and the Galactic Guild, the presumed-dead Lord Nekron and the evil Martian drug baron Count Cliff Bold are all trying to get their hands on the information .... Terasawa has storyboarded the film himself, production is going on at TMS at the moment, and with Manga Entertainment involved it seems a safe bet that UK fans will see the finished result in the not too distant future.



*With thanks to Doug Rice and Ted Piwowar, whose translation of COBRA - THE MOVIE gave me my first chance to understand the plot! -*

*Helen McCarthy*



Below: COBRA blasts CRYSTAL BOY





SPECIAL KOICHI OHATA POSTER  
DRAWN ESPECIALLY FOR

アニメFX  
AnimeFX







# OHATA DATA

The career of the director/designer/writer  
(Updated from our listing  
in AFX#1, March '94)



## MECHA DESIGNER

AIM FOR THE TOP! GUNBUSTER  
MACROSS II  
BORGMAN  
TOBIKAGE  
BABEL II  
GENOCYBER  
M.D. GEIST  
HAGANE NO ONI  
CYBERNETICS GUARDIAN  
GALVION

## GUEST MECHA DESIGNER

PATLABOR (OAV series)  
MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: CHAR'S  
COUNTERATTACK  
ALBEGAS  
LASERION  
GALLAT  
NG KNIGHT LAMUNE & 40

## MONSTER DESIGNER

FIVEMAN (live action)  
RED HAYATE  
B-FIGHTER (Live action)

## DIRECTOR

GENOCYBER  
M.D. GEIST  
HAGANE NO ONI  
CYBERNETICS GUARDIAN  
M.D. GEIST II  
M.D. GEIST - DIRECTOR'S CUT

## STORYBOARDS

DANGAIOH  
RED HAYATE

Left: GENOCYBER

Below: HAGANE NO ONI (Devil Robot)



# KOICHI OHATA INTERVIEW

Mr. Ohata very kindly gave this exclusive interview to AFX in mid-December 1995. Many thanks to Central Park Media's Young Hwal Son (for translating) and Jeff Zitomer (for co-ordinating the interview).

*CYBERNETICS GUARDIAN* was your first "solo" work as a director. How do you feel about it being released in the West?

Since this was to be my debut as a director, I naturally wanted to apply all of my knowledge and experience when making *CYGUARD*. However, I chose to stay away from an idol-oriented or girl-oriented story, even though this kind of animation was very popular back then. (*CYGUARD* was released in Japan in 1989.) I really wanted to make an animated film with a strong element of horror, instead - reminiscent of *Dracula*, *Frankenstein* and so on. I'm really glad that Western fans are enjoying *CYGUARD*.

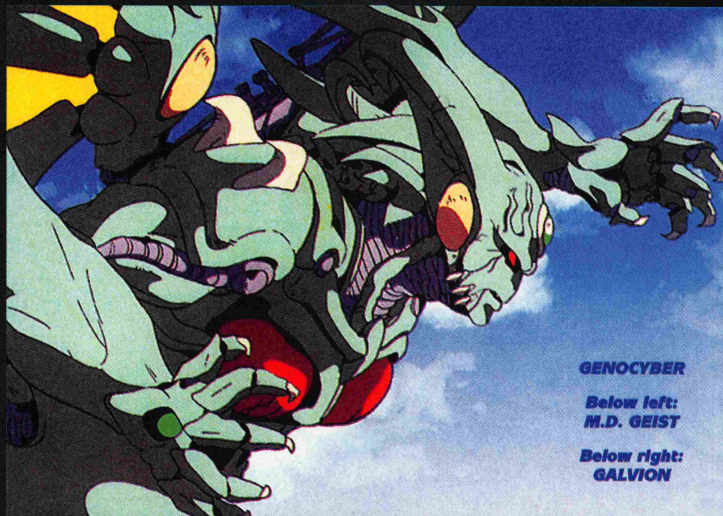


You did quite a number of innovative things with the basic science fiction adventure story in this release. What do you personally think are the features of the story which Western fans might find unusual, or of which they should take special note?

I got the idea for *CYGUARD* when I first saw Jackie Chan's movie *Armor of God* (which, in my opinion, was a parody of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*). I decided that I wanted to make an animated film about an evil character encased in a suit of armour - like a knight's armour. *CYGUARD* is my interpretation of that armour in a futuristic setting.

It's 6 years since you released *CYGUARD* in Japan and you have had a number of other projects out since that time. Do you think that your work as a director has changed or developed in any particular ways since your debut?

*CYGUARD* came out 6 years ago and *M.D. GEIST* came out 10 years ago - but I think those titles may have come out too soon for people to appreciate in Japan - they were ahead of their time. But now, some Western anime critics have told me



that many of the same elements are now present in big-budget American motion pictures such as *Judge Dredd*. I guess maybe *CYGUARD* and *M.D. GEIST* were too revolutionary when they were first released! Because of this, I wish that I could direct a live-action version of *CYGUARD*! I'd love to see my work compared to Hollywood motion pictures!

As a director, of course, you have complete responsibility for the whole creative side of the project. Do you prefer the slightly less onerous job of a designer, or do you enjoy the problems and stresses of directing?

If I created the story, then it usually went to direct, as well. As a director, I like to have a hand in everything, especially character and background designs and storyboards! When I am not directing a project, I prefer to concentrate on mecha and character designs.

Now that you're working on the manga of *M.D. GEIST* with Studio Go!, could you tell us if you notice any difference in the way of working between American comic artists and Japanese ones?

American comics have a clear division of labour, namely pencilling, colouring and inking. In Japanese manga, the artists usually do everything. The artist retains more control over the entire project, but then you don't have the free exchange of ideas that you do when working on an American comic book. Because of this division of labour, there is a free, creative atmosphere for each artist to decide what should be highlighted, what angles should be used, etc. Each artist contributes his creativity and direction.

Do you have plans to work on any other manga for CPM Comics - a *CYGUARD* manga, maybe?

*M.D. GEIST* Comics was a co-opera-

tion for *B-FIGHTER* (Beetle Fighter), a live-action TV program which is currently running in Japan. I'm currently working on two major projects: *M.D. GEIST PART II* and *M.D. GEIST - DIRECTOR'S CUT*, which will be called *M.D. GEIST - PERFECT EDITION* in Japan. For Western fans the Central Park Media release should follow later in 1996.

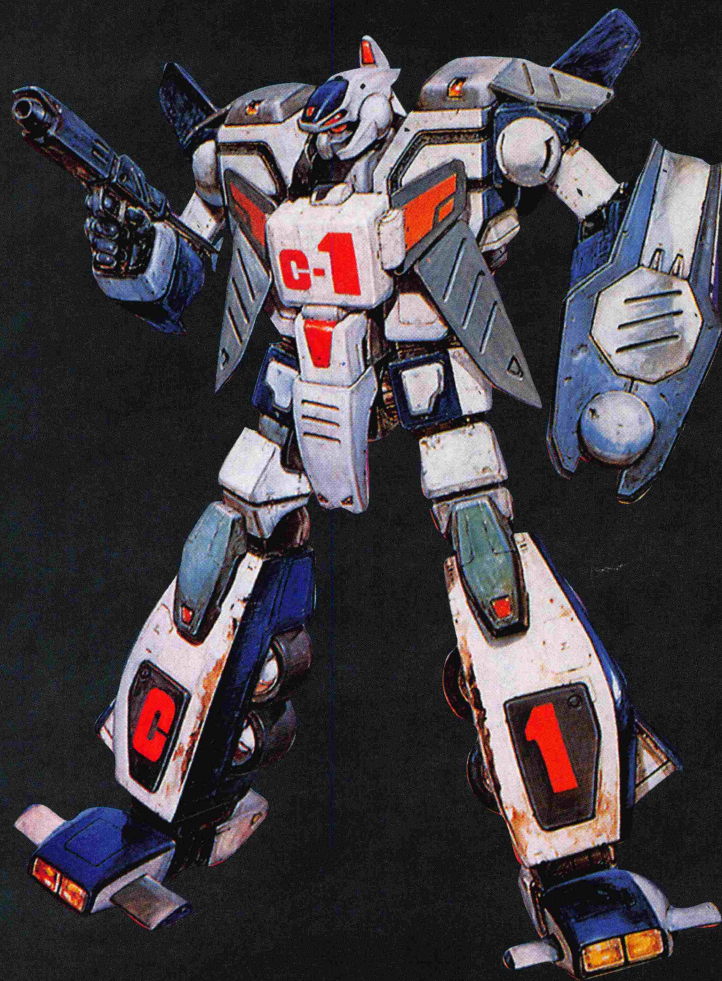
Is there anything on Japanese TV at the moment that particularly interests you, or any Western films that have caught your attention?

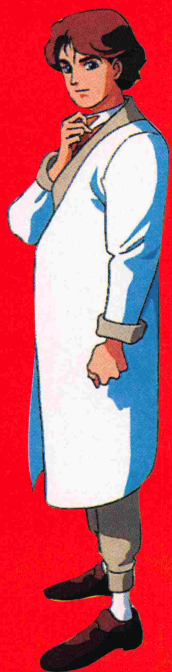
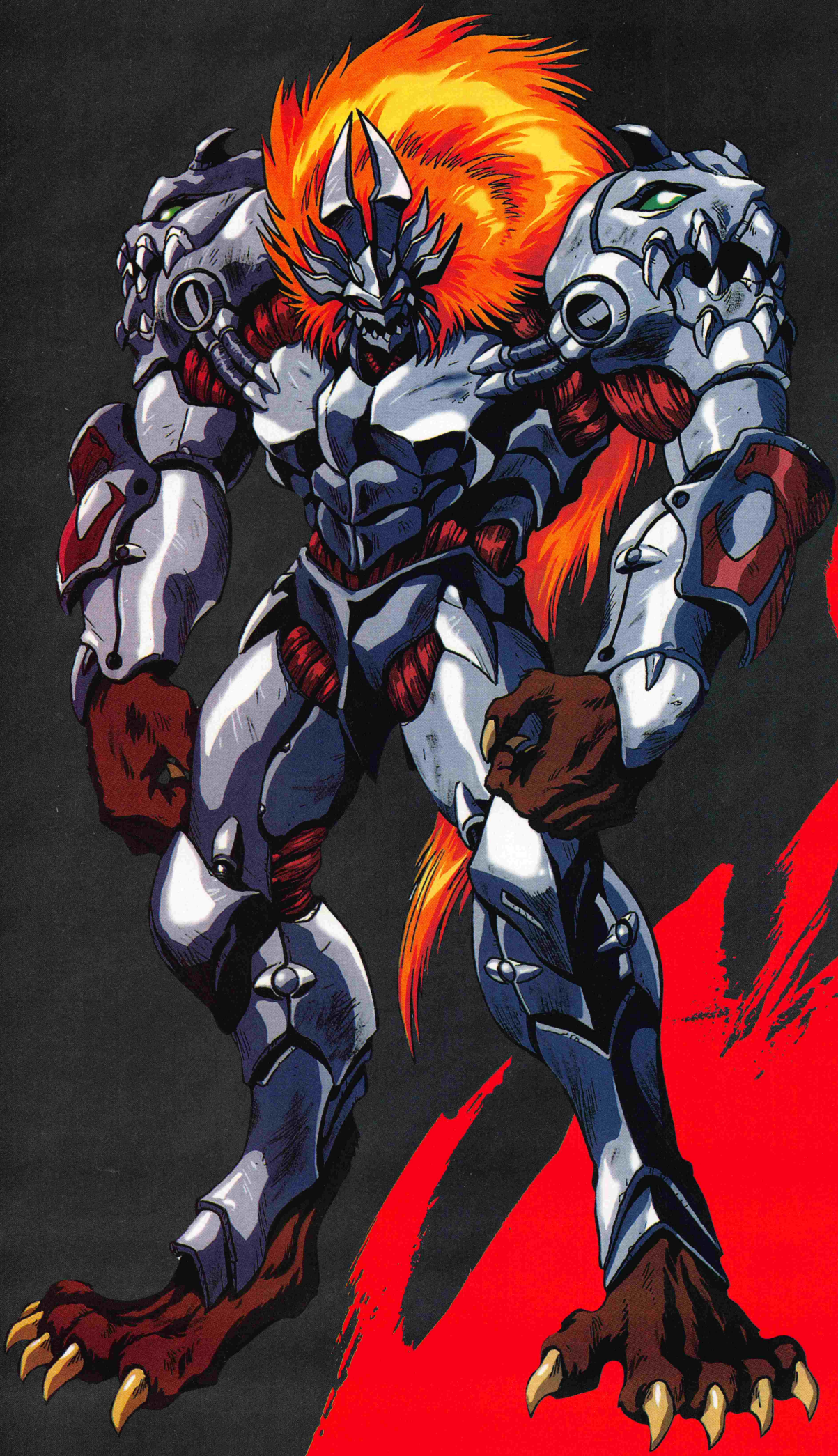
Although it's been out for a while, I recently saw Kawajiri's *NINJA SCROLL*, and I really enjoyed it.

There'll be a number of good mecha shows coming out in the USA, and hopefully the UK, over the next 12 months. Can we look forward to seeing any more of your work in the West in 1996?

As I mentioned, I'm currently working on *M.D. GEIST PART II* and *M.D. GEIST - DIRECTOR'S CUT*. I'll also be working on CPM Comics' *M.D. GEIST GROUND ZERO* comic, which will be the prequel to the original *M.D. GEIST OVA*. I don't think fans will be disappointed.

Thank you very much.. Mr. Ohata!





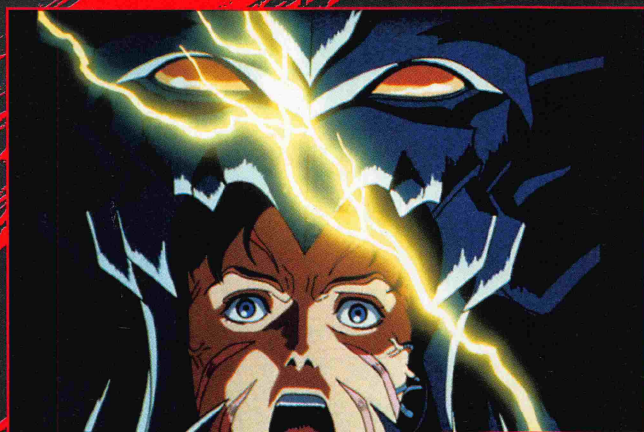
CYBER

## CYGUARD INBOUND

In 1989 Koichi Ohata made his directorial debut with *CYBERNETICS GUARDIAN*, an OAV which he (and some American anime critics) now describe as 'ahead of its time'. The 45-minute OAV paid homage to a number of the young director's influences and passions, but a major influence was the long tradition of horror movies like *FRANKENSTEIN* and *DRACULA*. Ohata was looking for a way to interpret the core themes of these classic stories using the contemporary science fiction vocabulary, with its cyberpunk overtones and its increasing concern with contemporary urban and scientific problems. But he didn't want to lose the impetus and excitement of his favourite action movies; to tell a powerful and intelligent story through gripping, fastmoving visuals was his main ambition.

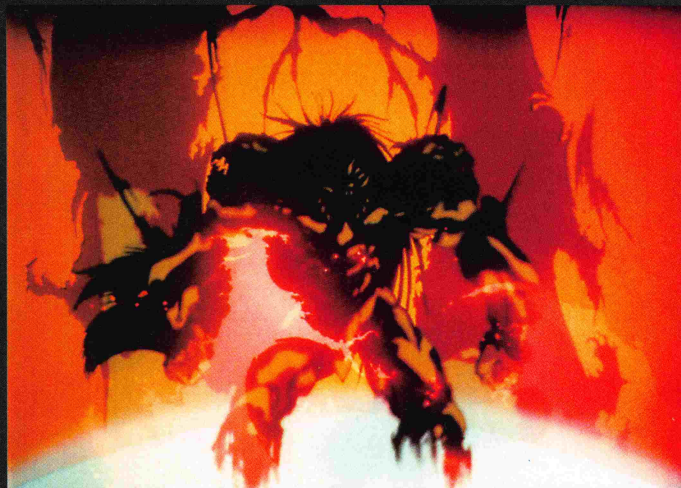
Ohata had been active as a professional for four years before his first chance to direct came along. In 1985 he had created the character which is still his favourite, M.D. Geist, a genetically engineered killing machine whose initials stand for 'Most Dangerous'. He was already interested in telling a story and showing character through the medium of action-adventure, and with *CYGUARD*, as he often refers to his first director's credit, he developed this interest further. It forms both a record of his interests and concerns at that point, and an outline sketch of what was yet to come.

His methods were in many ways remarkably close to those of the classic horror directors. He took a small central cast - just three characters are at the heart of the drama - then added interesting minor figures who have 'cameo roles', flitting into and out of the action and only allowing us to glimpse a small part of each one's individual story. He confined the action to a small area - a few 'locations' in the city of Cyberwood and its slum district, Cancer. Most of them are enclosed, even claustrophobic, so that when the final action of the climax breaks out into the open air, the sense of space and scope is almost dizzying. His lighting effects are carefully controlled, and he chose music to



# CYGUARD NETICS GUARDIAN

by **HELEN  
McCARTHY**



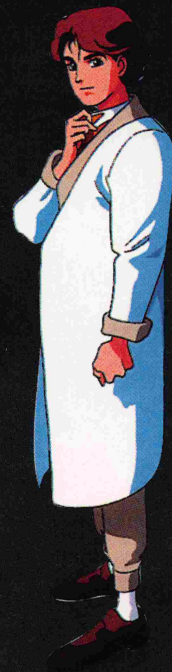
echo the tensions within the script - most of it is, quite literally, heavy metal music. There are also more explicit homages to the great icons of horror and sfx cinema; for example, look out for my personal favourite shot, where the transformed Stalker clings to the side of a skyscraper in an image that's pure KING KONG.

The story is open-ended; the climax doesn't bring a conclusion, but rather invites speculation that further adventures of the Cybernetics Guardian are possible. Sadly, Ohata's increasingly busy and pressured career ever since has not allowed him the time to go back and pick up the threads of the tale again, exploring what happens next. He tends to develop his ideas over a long period of time - this OAV sees the debut of the Genocyber, which was later to star in its own series - and since in his latest interview (see elsewhere) he doesn't rule out the possibility of a CYGUARD comic, this could be one way to continue the story; but in this writer's opinion it cries out for a weekly half-hour TV slot. As the jeep with the hero and heroine pulls away at the end, I could just imagine the line "In next week's episode..." leading us into a trailer for the next instalment of their adventures. And it doesn't have to be anime - the director has said he would love to direct a live-action version. Are you looking for a project, Mr. Spielberg, Mr. Lucas? Call Koichi Ohata, he may have just the thing for you!

### BACKGROUND

The future city of Cyberwood is a hightech metropolis full of thriving businesses and people going about their daily lives. However, like all major cities, it has a few problems. The main one is the slum district of Cancer, a festering cesspool of low-grade, lowrent housing, petty crime, violence and disorder. Some of Cyberwood's finest brains are trying to come up with solutions to the problems of Cancer, solutions ranging from new political initiatives to help its residents to genocidal programmes to wipe them out altogether.

There's another problem, though, of which the city authorities are not aware. The Doldo Brethren, a secret sect with headquarters in a ruined church, a large and growing membership, and mystical resources of seemingly limitless power, is plotting to reincarnate the destructive god Saldor through a 'Divine Armour'. And he's only the first in a line of powerful gods whom the Brethren want to bring back into the world - in order to bring it under their control. They've been plotting this for quite a while - over twenty years, in fact, ever since they genetically altered a number of young boys to implant the 'seeds'



JOHN STALKER

which will enable them to become host bodies for Saldor and his kin.

Meanwhile, in the SGC science unit, two scientists are each developing a different mobile armour.

The Cybernetic Guardian unit will have the strength to police the streets of Cancer, defuse any tensions found there and bring wrongdoers to justice/ The Genocyber unit will solve the problem in a much more direct manner - by blasting them all to Hell.

### MAIN CHARACTERS

#### JOHN STALKER

A young man whose pleasant demeanour and quiet manner hides a sharp scientific mind, John is Leyla's assistant on the Cyguard project. He has worked his way up from the slums of Cancer where he was born, through education, to his present position. However he has also been selected in his early childhood for quite another role in life - as the reincarnation of the god Saldor, destined to wreak devastation on Cyberwood and the world. His basic decency will fight the malign influence of the transformation, but can he possibly win through with his own personality intact?

#### ADLER VON STEIN

An aristocratic young scientist who is also a bit of a dandy, he wears his hair in a distinctive lilac peak and dresses elegantly in a style all his own. Although he has a remarkably agile brain and is very gifted, he is also a supremacist who thinks the best way to deal with





ADLER VON STEIN



LEYLA ROSETTA

disorderly elements among the 'lower orders' is by mass extermination. He fancies Leyla like mad and hopes to persuade her that he is the ideal mate, as well as getting her to abandon what he sees as woolly-minded compassion for the 'scum' who live in the slums of Cancer along with her Guardian project. He is the creator and eventual wearer of the Genocyber armour.

#### LEYLA ROSETTA

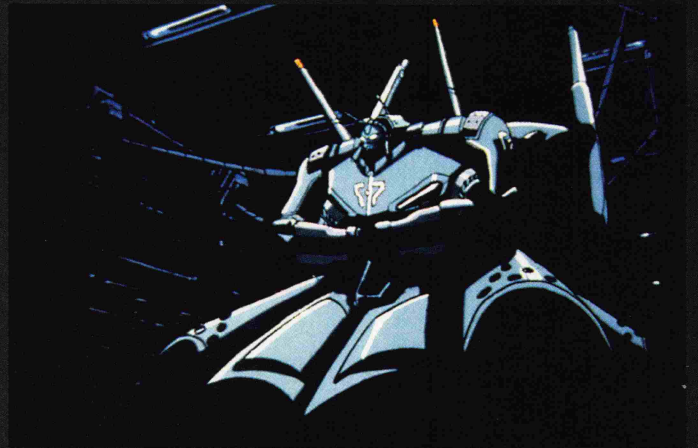
(Note: The direct transliteration of name from Japanese characters is RAIA, or Laia.)

A beautiful blonde scientist, who believes passionately in her work and in the need for a humane way to contain and even reform the menace of the Cancer slums, Leyla is very fond of her young assistant John, but is being seriously pursued by Adler. She is resourceful and not easily frightened; when John is abducted she is determined to find him, and even after his transformation she trusts him enough to risk everything to help him survive and win his freedom.

#### CREW

DIRECTOR **Koichi Ohata**  
 SCREENPLAY **Mutsumi Sanjo**  
 CHARA DESIGN **Atsushi Yamagata**  
 PRODUCER **Hidenobu Ohyama**  
 MUSIC **Norimasa Yamanaka**  
 PRODUCTION CO **AIC**  
 English version :  
 EXECUTIVE PRODUCER  
**John O'Donnell**  
 PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATOR  
**Stephanie Shalofsky**  
 TRANSLATOR **Neil Nadelman**

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 1989



# DANGER ARE AND MANGA

**We interrupt this magazine for a data downlink. There are a lot of anime and manga researchers in this country. There are the good, the bad and the ugly, but a heartening number of them come to Anime FX in search of inspiration and help. Those of us staff minions who'd really like the editor to get on with editing the magazine, instead of writing people's theses for them, have hit on this idea as a way of saving time in the office and making sure that those researchers who do contact us have no excuse for not buying at least one copy of this magazine... You wouldn't believe how many of them have NEVER opened an anime or manga magazine, from any country! Many people's initial enquiries follow the same pattern, or make similar assumptions about the area to be studied, which is why we've hunted down the easiest mistakes to make. If you're planning on writing any substantial amount of words on anime or manga, it's not worth starting until this article seems to be repeating the obvious...**

## 1: TERMINOLOGY ('What is it?')

It may be hard to imagine, but some researchers do not even recognise the distinction between anime and manga. For the record, an anime is a cartoon (from 'animation') and a manga is a comic. Many writers spend precious time and energy speculating on the etymological origin of the term 'manga' but excessive discussion of the meaning of the separate characters ('irresponsible pictures') is as useless as discussion of the meaning of our own words. Few texts feel the need to discuss the implications of the word 'comic' (as in 'comical'), ask yourself if similar arguments in your own text are relevant, or merely a mystifying tangent. What we are talking about here is nothing more complicated than cartoons and comics, but since we are discussing those with a

particularly Japanese origin and style, we use these terms in order to allow us to make the distinction in our arguments between Japanese and non-Japanese works. Many in the industry use the terminology in the same way, although some persist in selling anime under the catch-all term of manga. Their reason for doing so may be worthy of discussion in itself, but there is no firm linguistic basis for this malapropism. Another word that the researcher might hear is 'gekiga' ('drama-pictures') which is normally used as the Japanese translation for 'graphic novel'. If you feel the need to resort to high-falutin' terms like 'graphic novel', chances are you're trying too hard to impress your supervisor...

## 2: STATISTICS ('How much of it is there?')

Remember to be wary of all statistics, especially those compiled on a cross-cultural basis. All writers, good or bad, have their own personal agenda to pursue, but as a supposedly-objective researcher you should weigh up the discrepancies. One of the most common statistics you will probably have to face is that of manga sales as a proportion of overall Japanese publishing. In the last year we've seen estimates that range from 12% (in a Japanese newspaper) to 40% (in a master's dissertation from a British university). Both authors may have been working from the same figures, but had separate cases to argue. The 12% figure was obtained from an article in the English-language edition of the Yomiuri Shinbun, which aimed to show that while comics play a significant part in Japanese life, they do not crowd out more 'acceptable' forms of entertainment (this tells you more about the Yomiuri's opinion of its audience than it does about Japanese reading habits). The 40% figure was from a thesis that aimed to demonstrate the *paramount* importance of manga in Japanese culture; another example of statistics proving nothing.

There is no easy answer to this

paradox. We cannot give you a figure of our own and resolve it once and for all. Owing to the hidden agenda of many sources, they rarely explain how their particular figure was reached. Was it number of titles, number of pages, volumes sold or even a percentage of overall till receipts at bookstores? Who can tell? Japanese statisticians are just as willing to manipulate these figures to their own end as are their western counterparts: witness a recent report which claimed that Japanese book publishing had the third largest turnover in the world, after the USA and the UK. Did this include manga as well as printed books? Probably. But did it just count the graphic novels, or did it also include monthly manga digests, which are technically magazines but have more pages than many books. And if it did include these, did it fudge the figures still further by counting graphic novel reprints that originally appeared in serial form in those same digests? That would effectively mean that the same title was being counted twice.

Researchers in media studies would do well to apply this healthy scepticism when analysing sales figures from western production companies. While anime 'x' may well have sold double the number of anime 'y', you ought to be looking for any hidden variables. Comparison of sales figures has to take into account such factors as release company, release date, subtitle or dub, marketing budget, points-of-sale and country of sale. Of course a US release is likely to sell proportionately more, but that is because the US population is larger. Sales for subtitled tapes are usually a fraction of that for dubs, but this might tell you something about the company itself, since subtitled releases are also cheaper to make. Anime 'y' might be a sub, from a small company that can't afford a dubbing studio; anime 'x' might have a proportionately larger budget or duplication run. If 20,000 copies were dumped on the market at once, they are more likely to be seen by potential buyers. Perhaps more people might have bought the other title, but didn't see it because only 2,000 copies were made.

## 3: AUDIENCE ('Who is it for?')

This also applies when dealing with anime back in Japan. If a researcher decides to compare the quality of two works, they should first make sure that they are playing on a level field. Anime are made for three different media: film, television and video (OAV), along a timeline that stretches across most of this century. *Akira* was made on 35mm film for a theatrical release, therefore it was bound to have a higher budget than, for example, the made-for-television *Urusei Yatsura*.

Similarly, it is often worth asking yourself questions about the Japanese target market. The audience for manga in Japan is a lot wider than in the west. This would be easy to prove to foreign observers if we could show them examples of manga on cookery, car mechanics or sewage management, but as it is, criticism has been hampered by the ignorance of the reading public. We are told that 'comics' are for children, therefore manga 'x' which contains explicit material, is a corrupting influence. William Burroughs isn't found in the kids' section, so why should Masamune Shirow?

The same applies to anime. Yes, *Legend of the Overfiend* is packed with sex and violence, but certain journalists in the UK have assumed that because it is a 'cartoon', it was always intended for children. *Overfiend* is not on sale in Japan to under-eighteens; it was always an 'adult' video.

## 4: NATURE OF SOURCES ('What's happened here?')

A warning: sometimes all is not as it seems. A surprisingly large proportion of the researchers who contact us have no grounding in the Japanese language, which inevitably means that they are using translations as their primary source material. But there are more hidden variables at work here, and it is usually best to assume that any translated

# HAS IN ANIME A RESEARCH

anime or manga is no more than a secondary source. This is important when looking at dubs, where the translated script may have been rewritten. In some cases, a company will tailor a translation to suit their current target market. This may mean that ethnocentric elements in the production are shaved away to make it look less 'Japanese', or that a relatively innocuous anime is 'fifteen-teen' with gratuitous swearing to make it fit in with the other 'adult' titles on a company's books. In cases such as these, the material will be telling you more about the dubbing company than the Japanese originators. Subtitled releases can be equally questionable. Has the studio prepared a subtitle from the original Japanese script, or from a dubbing script that was written for lip sync? That might have led to minor, but important changes in the plot or dialogue.

One case in point is the *Overfiend* series, whose chequered history has passed it through the hands of at least four different dubbing companies. Each one has added their own individual 'spin' to the script, each equally correct, but incongruous when viewed as a whole from the British end of the production. And what has happened to our understanding of the plot if an important part of it has been excised amidst all the cuts demanded by the BBFC? Researchers intent on pursuing this kind of textual enquiry should bear in mind that there is currently no depository for translated and untranslated anime scripts in this country, and that it might be a good idea to look into the availability of fan translations on Internet billboards, for comparison if nothing else.

## 5: CULTURAL RELATIVISM ('What am I seeing?')

All the considerations listed above are based on the practical side of anime and manga production. Many researchers concentrate more on the cultural and textual side of it. The danger here lies in using anime or manga to 'prove' generalisations

about Japanese culture, and in seeing signifiers of one's own culture or beliefs when they might have a completely different relevance to the Japanese. If one is talking about the effect of anime and manga on the Western audience, then such conclusions are acceptable, since the area of inquiry is *our own* reaction. However, if we are intending to use anime and manga as a starting point for a discussion of Japan and the Japanese, we must ask ourselves, are they likely to mean the same thing to the Japanese viewer as they do to us?

The Oriental scholar Frank Dikotter has developed a very useful test to help the researcher determine whether conclusions about 'the mysterious Japanese' are valid. He suggests if we would make the same generalisations about, for example, the French, or even ourselves. Many authorities suggest that the Japanese media is dominated by and derivative of the American entertainment business, without seeking to ask that same question of themselves. The British are just as beholden to American popular culture as the Japanese, but such an influence is harder to see in a culture such as ours, since we share many linguistic and racial origins with America. I saw a good demonstration of this at a question-and-answer session in Edinburgh, where the British audience were most uncomplimentary about the hackneyed plot and action in *The Professional: Golgo 13*. The irony here is that *Golgo 13* was made in Japan specifically for distribution in the West, and that it represents an attempt by the Japanese to appeal, not to each other, but to Westerners. *Golgo 13* might represent the Japanese opinion of what Westerners want to see, but not the reverse.

When we see something 'familiar' in an anime or manga, that only proves that it means something to us, not to the Japanese. When *Sight & Sound* magazine covered Appleseed, the reviewer went to great lengths in an attempt to read the 'message' in the Japlish signs, when the chances are that the misprints were not even noticed by the Japanese audience or creators. The

same applied for those researchers looking for a 'Christian' message in *Tokyo Babylon*. Yes, the characters do wear crucifixes, but is that a comment on foreign religions or a comment on the popularity of a certain Madonna album when the designers were planning the costumes? Is blue or pink hair really strange, or are we forgetting that it's not much stranger than blonde or red hair to the Japanese? And so on.

## 6: RESEARCH METHODS ('How do I do it?')

Well, you've made a good start by reading this magazine. This will give you a few pointers, a few juicy quotes from Japanese creators, some (hopefully) thought-provoking reviews and quite a bit of raw data just waiting to be analysed. But you will have already noticed the paucity of books on the subject, and no doubt your supervisor will be getting worried. The most valuable skill you can use in this kind of study is a knowledge of the Japanese language, but that can be hard to come by. A knowledge of Chinese, French or Italian can also prove very useful, as it will open up a whole parallel universe of alternative source materials and criticism. Another place that I found invaluable during my research days was that good old staple, the anime convention. Researchers into Western reaction will find a treasure trove of willing interviewees, and researchers into the works themselves will find oodles of items on show that they have never even heard of. With little worthwhile academic research into anime or manga at the moment, another good place to sniff around is the Internet. Internet can be an extremely important resource for the anime and manga researcher, but remember that just as you don't take legal advice from the man in the pub, not everything that you read there is trustworthy. Its real value lies in the dissemination of up-to-the-minute news (some of it true) and the availability of fan-translations of otherwise unavailable or bastardised scripts. It's also a good place to try out your ideas, although your welcome is likely to

wear thin if you start sending out mass e-mails of questionnaires and hoping that the rest of the world will do your research for you. Always remember that the majority of Internet subscribers have no sense of humour and need to flag irony with a smiley :). Furthermore, you ought to bear in mind the various unwritten codes of 'netiquette'. DON'T USE CAPITALS because it looks like you're shouting, be polite at all times and remember that you don't have to send someone's entire message back to them when you reply.

And as a final word to the wise, sometimes it's a lot more productive if you don't try and talk about the entire universe of anime and manga, cramming every possible detail into one piece of writing. There are plenty of different angles which allow you to streamline your research and not get too bogged down in explaining the basics every time. Just a few of the topics which we'd dearly like to see dedicated theses (and who knows, even 'spin-off' AFX articles) on... are: the European manga and anime business, pseudomanga, Chinese and Cantonese versions, individual companies both over here and over there, individual creators who aren't called Otomo or Shirow, women in anime/manga, the cinematography of anime, the mechanics of anime/manga translation, the Korean anime & animation industry, dojinshi and fanzines, the demographics of anime/manga fandom in a particular language territory, the influence (or not) of manga art on Western creators, and something statistically-watertight on the way in which anime and manga have changed our attitudes towards Japan over the last five years, if indeed they have...

On many occasions throughout history, discussion of the Orient has been a carefully-concealed study of ourselves. We can't give you all the answers, but we hope we've helped you ask some of the right questions. Good luck, and let us know how it goes. We now return you to your regular programming.



**In the interests of world peace and harmony and following on from issue 8's interview with Mr. Susumu Yoshikawa, AFX presents an interview with the newly de-rangered Kimberley, aka Amy Jo Johnson. It was a chance to get some real in-depth commentary on life at the other end of the production scale, and so, after brushing up his American, our staff translator hunted her down after a California audition, where she's getting used to life without the protection of Zordon ...**

**AFX** How did you get into acting?

I was born up in Cape Cod in Massachusetts, I was a gymnast which was, like, a really big help in Power Rangers, then I went off to New York City, where I studied at Lee Strasberg's Academy for a year and a half. Then I got in a car and went out to L.A., it was a real spur of the moment thing. I stayed there for two months, hated it.

**AFX** Huh?

Well, it's totally different from New York. Like in New York you don't need a car, the energy's totally different. Anyway, I went home for two weeks, then changed my mind, went back again, and within a week I had the job on Power Rangers, from an audition with Haim Saban...

**AFX** How much are you like Kimberley?

Well, y'know, when we first started I did the pilot, and the first few episodes, they made her really materialistic, they wanted her blonde ...

**AFX** Urgh!

Totally! They wanted a Valley Girl, but I changed that.

**AFX** You did?

Gradually. Well, y'know, I play the guitar, and we had her playing the guitar in one episode. I'm a gymnast, she's a gymnast ...

**AFX** Wasn't she a gymnast originally?

Well, yeah, but .... well, y'know, I changed her. I mean, I HATE pink!

**AFX** Oops. I have to ask, what is your favourite ...

Purple.

**AFX** Purple?

Purple.

**AFX** Rita Repulsa's secret love child?

Totally.

**AFX** Power Rangers The Movie. I believe it was your first film role, and also Bryan Forbes' first film as director? What was it like for you?

It was very, very different. I mean we got to spend two and a half months in Australia, which was great for me. Bryan Forbes was a great director to work with. I got to work with Paul Freeman (*Ivan Ooze*).

**AFX** The *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* guy

Yeah. He is an AMAZING actor. I learned a lot just from being on the set. But, like, it was much harder work, spending two and a half months on one REALLY BIG episode. Like, in the TV series, we only do four little episodes in two weeks. And the hours are longer y'know. But I'm off it now

**AFX** Excuse me?

I got off the show a month ago. I mean, I'll be on it till Christmas, but I've finished. They're got a new Pink Ranger, she's from Australia and she's really great, kind of like Olivia Newton-John, y'know? And I've done another film, *Suzy Keel*, with Shelley Long, so I've done another movie.

**AFX** You don't have to answer this if you don't want to, but did you go or were you pushed?

Oh, hey, I'm outta there, I can say what I want. I mean, I wanted to leave. It was good fun and I don't regret doing it at all. I mean it was a great start, and I was really lucky to get a part just a week after get-

ting to the West Coast. But, you know ...

**AFX** How would you explain the success of the Power Rangers? They really have been an amazing worldwide phenomenon?

Oh .... kids, y'know, they're really funny. But I mean Power Rangers has got everything that they look for in a show. It's got dinosaurs, monsters, real kids they can relate to, bright colours.

**AFX** Do you think it has far to go?

Well ... kids don't really care. I mean there's been cast changes and all, but I'll be on re-runs FOREVER.

**AFX** Were there any protests about the lineup changes. Or is it like Menudo, where they just chuck 'em out when they get too old?

Oh yeah! I mean, first season the Green Ranger leaves, but the kids went mad, so they bring him back. I mean, we had mothers calling up saying "My little boy won't come out of his room." God!

**AFX** And when you left?

Oh ... they don't know I've gone yet, but when they do ...

**AFX** I want to bring you back to Haim Saban, and his involvement with other Japanese shows.

You know he did a POWER RANGERS pilot eight years ago but no-one was interested? Oh yeah.. I mean I grew up on that stuff when I was a kid. And you know, Shuki Levy, his partner, he's a song writer, and he wrote, like, the INSPECTOR GADGET song and the Smurfs and stuff.

**AFX** And are you a fan of it now?

What? INSPECTOR GADGET and THE SMURFS?

**AFX** No! I mean things like ROBOTECH, ASTRO BOY, SPEED RACER ... They're Japanese too ...

Oh yeah, sure. But I don't watch much TV these days. I don't have time. I'll read a book or play guitar

or something.

**AFX** I want to ask you about the Japanese footage. I get this feeling you had more fun doing the dubbing than you did filming the American bits.

Oh man! It's just like a Godzilla movie! Even though it's mainly American footage now, we still have to do ADR because those are stunt doubles doing all the stuff. And some of them are actually the original Japanese stunt guys from the Japanese serials, y'know, like, er, Jee ... er ... Jaw ... what is it? Je ...

**AFX** ZYURANGER?

Right.

**AFX** What do you plan to do now it's over? Is it back to TV or on to films?

I'd like to do films as the primary thing. I mean I WOULD do TV, there's a lot of good TV, but there's a lot of bad TV, but you know, I'll do anything to get me on the path to where I want to go. Something with longevity. You know, if you want to be famous, you can be famous for something, but a long-lasting career is harder. I mean, my idols are people like, Jodie Foster, Holly Hunter, Sally Fields ...

**AFX** Would you consider going into directing, like Jodie Foster?

I wanna write. I play guitar. I've just done a demo tape. Who knows?

**AFX** Finally, what advice do you have for anyone interested in following in your footsteps?

I've just been to a college and talked about the same thing. I wanted to be an actress since I was, like, seven, I love the art of it, the passion of it. If you have a passion for the art of it, you can do anything you wanna do. But it's not easy, it's tough, and you've gotta love it and love your art. You can't say to someone go to this college or do that course, because everyone finds their own steps, it's a fate luck kinda thing. I feel very lucky. I saved all my money. I was smart.

# SURRENDERING THE PINK

**Jonathan Clements  
talks to Amy Jo Johnson**



## ULTRA 64 NEWS

Following last month's piece on Nintendo 64, two pieces of working software (unfinished) and eleven game demos were on display at Famicom Spaceworld and should certainly make 1996 an interesting year for video game consumers. The playable version of Mario 64 looked absolutely stunning with fast bold polygon graphics that still managed to retain the style of the original Mario games. As you can see from the pic, the game looks amazing and, with Nintendo's gameplay polish, will play like a dream too. The other piece of software available to play was the 64 version of Kirby bowl. Despite being a fairly basic game in comparison to Mario, the graphics were amazingly cute and should prove popular to fans of the previous releases. Also displayed on video demos were Mario Kart R, Starfox 64 and The shadow of the Empire which is based on the Star wars films and looks too good to be true! Nintendo have announced the 21st of April 1996 as the launch date at a price of 25000 Yen! (approx £160.00). Whether this will actually happen remains to be seen but it looks like the battle of the super consoles is far from over.

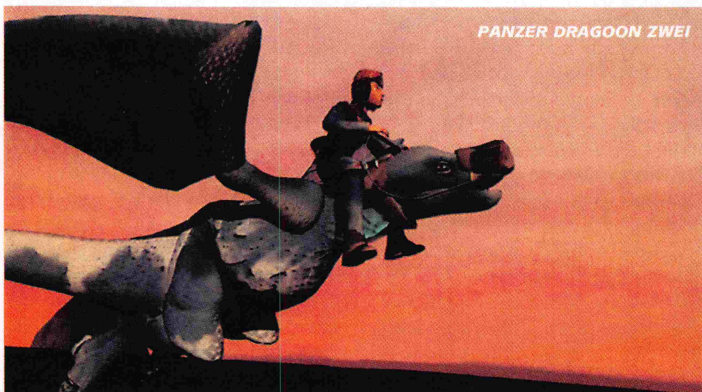


## PANZER DRAGON 2

Sega have revealed details of a sequel to their popular Saturn shoot-em-up Panzer Dragoon Zwei (two in German) it looks fairly similar to the first game, which is no bad thing, with the inclusion of ground based sequences to vary the action. Like its predecessor, Panzer 2 also features an impressive Computer video sequence to set the scene but hopefully the challenge on this outing will be beefed up as the first game was a tad easy. Definitely something to look forward to.

## PLAYSTATION NEWS

Out now in Japan are two releases that should have Playstation owners chomping at the bit. Firstly there's Takara's Toshinden 2 which, after the success of the first game should be eagerly anticipated by one and all and secondly there's Sony's Horned Owl which should be in competition with Sega's Virtua Cop. Marketed with a light gun, Horned Owl features character and Mecha designs by Masamune Shirow and therefore goes straight to the top of my most wanted list. Hopefully, we'll be having reviews of both of these ace titles next month so, until then, Mata Ne!



## DRAGONBALL Z : ULTIMATE BATTLE 22

Following the cheat we gave you for this Playstation beat-em-up a few months ago, here's a special guide to help you get the most out of the five new characters available. All the following moves are written for the player facing right.

U = UP , UR = UP RIGHT , R = RIGHT , DR = DOWN RIGHT , D = DOWN , DL = DOWN LEFT , L = LEFT and UL = UP LEFT .

### KAME SENNIN

*Goku's sensei at the start of the series who was eventually greatly outranked by his pupil. Later turned into a comic relief character.*

2ND DAN HIZA GE RI : R,L,R and Kick  
KAME SEN RIYU GE BU SHIYU : D,DL,L,R and Kick  
KIYO SUI KEN : D,DR,R and Fireball  
SUI KEN KAME PUNCH : D,DR,R and Punch  
SUI KEN KAME KICK : D,DR,R and Kick  
GE DAN KIYO SUI KEN : R,DR,D and Fireball  
GE DAN SUI KEN PUNCH : R,DR,D and Punch  
GE DAN SUI KEN KICK : R,DR,D and Kick  
ZAN ZOU KEN : R,L,R and Punch  
KAME HAME WAVE : L,DL,D,DR,R and Fireball  
BAN IKU BITSU KURI SHIYOU : R,DR,D,DL,L and Fireball  
MAXIMUM KAME HAME WAVE : D,DL,L,R and Fireball  
METEO ATTACK: MA FUU WAVE : R,DR,D,DL,L,DL,D,DR,R and Fireball

### YOUNG SON GOKU

*Goku as a young boy as he was near the start of the series. Yet to learn many of his fighting techniques but still a tough little number.*

HATSU SHIYU KEN : L,DL,D,DR,R and Punch  
NIYO I BAU ATTACK : Hold L, R and Punch  
JUNKEN GU : L,R and Punch  
JUNKEN CHIYOKI : L,R and Kick  
JUNKEN PA- : L,R and Fireball  
KUU CHIYU KAME HAME WAVE : (While Jumping) R,D and Punch  
KAME HAME WAVE : L,DL,D,DR,R and Fireball  
YUU ZAU KAME HAME WAVE : R,DR,D,DL,L,R and Fireball  
METEO ATTACK : APE TRANSFORMATION : (Near Opponent) L,DL,D,DR,R,DR,D,DL,L and Punch

### MR SATAN

*Champion Fighter of the Earth, Mr Satan is actually a pussycat compared to the rest of the Dragonball fighters. Cannot Fly or launch fireballs so relies on his backpack for handy weapons.*

ROLLING ATTACK : L,DL,D and Punch  
VULCAN JAB : D,DL,L and Punch  
BIRI BIRI PUNCH : D,DR,R and Punch  
METSUTA UCHI UI YUU RAN BU : R,DR, D,DL,L,R and Punch  
DYNAMITE KICK : D,DR,R and Kick

SATAN'S TOKU SEI BAZOOKA HOU: L,DL, D, DR,R and Fireball  
TOKUSEI ULTRA DAI BAKUDAN : D,DL,L,R and Fireball  
TOKUSEI ULTRA DAI BAKUDAN SHITSU PAI: D,DL,L,DL,D,DR,R and Fireball  
FOUR SHOT MISSILE LAUNCHER: R,DR,D, DL,L,R and Fireball  
METEO ATTACK : CHAMPION'S KA WAI NA MA I : R,DR,D,DL,L,DL,D,DR,R and Punch

### SUPER SAIYAN THREE

*Son Goku's final transformation into one of the most powerful fighters in the universe. In this form, Vegeta (Goku's rival) finally realises who is the number one fighter.*

DASH PUNCH : D,DR,R and Punch  
SAIYAN THREE ATTACK : R,DR,D,DL,L and Punch  
SLASH LEG DOWN : (While Jumping) R,D and Kick  
GEIRUSHU-TO : D,DL,L,R and Kick  
GEIRUSHU-TO REVERSE : D,DR,R,L and Kick  
SEUZAN COMBINATION : L,DL,D,DR,R and Kick  
KI O I HAU : HOLD L,R and Fireball  
HA KAME HAME WAVE : L,DL,D,DR,R and Fireball  
CHIYOU KAME HAME WAVE : D,DL,L,R and Fireball  
SUPER QUICK KAME HAME WAVE: R,DR,D, DL,L,R and Fireball  
METEO ATTACK : SHIYON KAN I DOU  
METEO SMASH : L,R,D,U and Punch

### GOGITA

*A deadly combination of Son Goku and Vegeta. Possibly even more powerful than Super Saiyan Three.*

ME TO RO ATTACK : L,DL,D,DR,R and Punch  
GOGITA KERI TO BASHI : D,DL,L and Kick  
SUKURYU DROP KICK : R,L,R and Kick  
SLASH DOWN KICK : (While Jumping) R,D and Kick  
SHIYON KAN I DOU SLIDE DASH: Dash (R1 or R2) and Punch  
SHIYON KAN I DOU SLASH DOWN: Dash and Fireball  
SHIYON KAN I DOU SUKURYU DROP: Dash and Kick  
KI O I HAU : HOLD L,R and Fireball  
ULTRA SUPER : L,DL,D,DR,R and Fireball  
FINAL KAME HAME WAVE : D,DL,L,R and Fireball  
QUICK ULTRA BALL : D,DL,L,R,DR,D,DL,L and Fireball  
GOGITA GEN KI DAMA : HOLD D,U and Fireball  
METEO ATTACK : GOGITA METEO ATTACK: L,DL,D,DR,R,DR,D,DL,L and Punch

*Well there you go, all the moves for the hidden characters in the game. Next month we'll print the Meteo Smash attacks for the rest of the characters. See you then.*

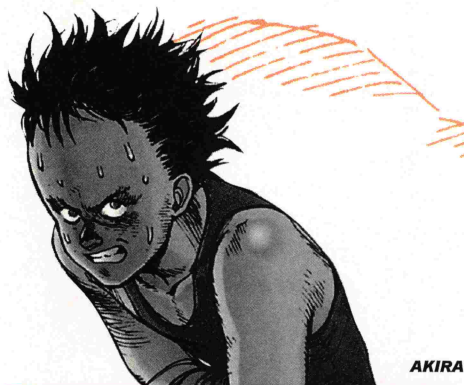


## MANGA IN FOCUS

# OTOMO REVISITED



by **JIM SWALLOW**



It's a safe bet that there isn't an English-speaking anime fan or manga reader who hasn't heard of, or seen the works of Katsuhiro Otomo. In his early forties, Otomo has already laid claim to critical success both in his native Japan and the West. The winner of the Nippon SF Taisho and Seiun Awards for his comics work, he has turned his hand from manga to several animation projects, live action feature films, and television ads. But Otomo is best known for his magnum opus *AKIRA*, the monumental manga and anime creation that was almost single-handedly responsible for the 'arrival' of Japanese animation in the UK, and certainly responsible for the ballistic arc of popularity enjoyed by Manga Entertainment's early releases. Otomo's dynamic cyberpunk drama awakened Western viewers to a wider world of animation experience and the rest, as ever, is history.

Otomo's profile as a comics creator outside Japan is strong. Few of his countrymen and women enjoy such 'name' status in the West, excepting other *wunderkinder* like Rumiko Takahashi and Masamune Shirow, and Otomo's back catalogue of translated material is remarkably healthy. As noted above, his first appearance to English-language readers was through the *AKIRA* manga, brought over by Marvel's direct-sales 'mature' label Epic Comics in 1988. At the height of the manga boom started by Eclipse, First and other independent companies, Epic's purchase of *AKIRA* ushered in what would become the longest-running manga series in the West; Yoko Umezawa & Jo Duffy handled the translation, while Steve Oliff was brought in to colourise the black-and-white book. Colour was felt to be an essential by the powers at Epic, in keeping with the other comics in their stable and the general consensus, however valid or invalid, that the wider Western market would not respond to a monochrome book of such length and complexity. As *AKIRA* continued to run in Japan's *YOUNG* magazine, Epic started the mammoth 38-part saga while plans were being laid to bring the recently-released animated movie to the West.

Here in the UK, after screenings at a UK convention and film festivals in Bristol and London in 1990, Manga Entertainment (at that time known as Island World Communications Ltd.) showed the film to packed cinemas at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts and a hit was born. The shockwave began here, and M.E.L. rode it to the top of the anime distributors' heap with *AKIRA* lighting the way. Even five years after its video release, the movie remains in the Top Ten of popular

retail anime. Despite a break of over two years when Epic ceased publication in the early 90s, the comic book continued to sell in various formats, such as collected volumes, and in serial format (though Dark Horse International's (later Manga Entertainment's) *MANGA MANIA* monthly anthology, where the title is currently in its 31st instalment. While the 'hiatus' was largely blamed on Otomo's temporary departure from writing and drawing the book to work on the movie version, another alleged reason was the concern over the continued involvement of Oliff as colourist. Oliff had left Epic after alleged creative differences had arisen with the company, and on the return of *AKIRA* to English-language publication, Otomo is supposed to have flatly stated that he would allow no other colourist than the trusted Oliff to render his work. After contractual wrangles were sorted, the book arrived on the shelves once more (with a sharply noticeable price hike) and Epic's run ceased in December 1995 with the 37th and final issue, a showcase tribute special by several contemporary artists in the US comics scene.

1995 also saw UK mainstream publisher Reed initiate the Mandarin line of graphic novels. Otomo's work featured strongly, with an *AKIRA* volume and examples of his earlier work, *DOMU* and *MEMORIES*. Like *AKIRA*, *DOMU* was a story of psychic powers gone awry in an urban environment, albeit on a much more tightly focussed and less cosmic scale. Fans were spoilt for choice when, in addition to Mandarin's *DOMU: THE DREAMS OF CHILDREN*, American comics publisher Dark Horse released a three-issue miniseries of *DOMU: A CHILD'S DREAM*. Working from the same source, Otomo's prizewinning 1983 manga, Mandarin's team of translator Tony Kehoe and adapter Simon Jowett played against Studio Proteus' Dana Lewis and Toren Smith. While many felt that Dark Horse's version was more polished and better in retouch through the work of Tomoko Saito, others opted for Kehoe and Jowett's more colloquial script. Either way, *DOMU* is an impressive tale, a duel of minds that Otomo stretches as far thematically as he does his dramatic cityscape perspectives.

Mandarin's line also featured *MEMORIES*, a thirteen-strong short story anthology containing among others the 1981 tale *FAREWELL TO WEAPONS* and the 1980 story *MEMORIES* (also known as *MAGNETIC ROSE*). Both *FAREWELL...* and *MEMORIES/MAGNETIC ROSE* were released as colour one-off specials by Epic in 1992, worked on by Oliff, Duffy, Robert Spaulding and Yoko Umezawa, et al. Both were chosen as examples of Otomo's SF staple (*MEMORIES* was

advertised as "Sci-Fi Drama In The AKIRA Tradition"), the former a tale of future military conflict with a comic twist and the latter a bitter-sweet ghost story with a classic TWILIGHT ZONE sting. Otomo's current work available for English readers is THE LEGEND OF MOTHER SARAH, a series which ended this year in Japan after five years in a popular boys' magazine. His writing talents are complemented by the artwork of Takumi Nagayasu in this post-apocalypse road movie manga. The central character, the Mother Sarah of the title, is a principled and dedicated wanderer, searching the desolate and unruly wilderness of the post-war Earth for her children. Dark Horse's first eight-issue mini-series has recently ended, and a second, CITY OF THE CHILDREN, has begun in its place, while the characters and motivations of MOTHER SARAH are compelling, the manga lacks much of the drive evidenced by Otomo in DOMU and AKIRA, and its length precludes the punchiness of his shorter pieces.

Otomo's most recent animated feature utilises the anthology tactic once again; MEMORIES the anime reprises the MAGNETIC ROSE storyline, as well as two others. CANON FODER is a bizarre romp through a fortress city built by a culture obsessed with war, while STINKBOMB is a darkly comic SF escapade that pokes fun at the Military/Government combine. Fans can expect to see a cinema release of MEMORIES in 1996, with video to follow. Other translated anime bearing the Otomo stamp are few and far between in the UK, though the USA fares better. While M.E.L. have released the inventive SF comedy ROUJIN Z (in which a prototype robotic bed programmed to care for the elderly develops a mind of its own), other works like HARMAGEDDON and the excellent ROBOT CARNIVAL, another anthology for which Otomo provides the opening and closing sequences, have as yet to cross the Atlantic from the United States.

Despite his as-yet-unwaning popularity, much of Katsuhiro Otomo's other output remains unseen by Western eyes. His early manga material, like the 70s motorcycling drama HIGHWAY STAR and the action adventure GOOD WEATHER, as well as his shot at live action direction, WORLD APARTMENT HORROR, stay in their native form. With the imminent release of MEMORIES, Otomo's name has once again come to the fore. Fans expecting another AKIRA will be disappointed, but to expect no more from him does this gifted creator a disservice. Above all, Otomo's craft lies not just in his ability to play with our minds, but in his deft comedic streak and in his range of empathic characters.



DOMU



MEMORIES



THE LEGEND OF MOTHER SARAH

## THE TRANSLATED WORKS OF KATSUHIRO OTOMO

### MANGA

- AKIRA**, colour 38 issue series 1988-1995, published by Epic Comics.
- AKIRA**, colour collected volumes 1992-1993, published by Epic Comics.
- AKIRA: THE BEGINNING**, colour collected volume 1995, published by Mandarin
- DOMU: A CHILD'S DREAM**, black-and-white 3-issue series 1995, published by Dark Horse Comics
- DOMU: THE DREAMS OF CHILDREN**, black-and-white collected volume 1995, published by Mandarin
- FAREWELL TO WEAPONS** one-shot special 1992, published by Epic Comics.
- THE LEGEND OF MOTHER SARAH**, black-and-white 8 issue series 1995, published by Dark Horse Comics.
- THE LEGEND OF MOTHER SARAH: CITY OF THE CHILDREN**, black-and-white 8 issue series 1996, published by Dark Horse Comics.
- THE LEGEND OF MOTHER SARAH: TUNNEL TOWN**, black-and-white collected volume 1996, published by Dark Horse Comics.
- MEMORIES**, colour one-shot special 1992, published by Epic Comics.
- MEMORIES**, black-and-white & colour collected volume 1995, published by Mandarin.

### ANIME

- AKIRA**, Manga Entertainment Limited (UK), Streamline Pictures (USA), dubbed and subtitled
- AKIRA PRODUCTION REPORT**, Manga Entertainment Limited (UK), dubbed.
- HARMAGEDDON**, US Manga Corps (USA), subtitled.
- MEMORIES**, Manga Entertainment (UK and USA), dubbed.
- NEO-TOKYO**, Streamline Pictures (USA), dubbed.
- ROBOT CARNIVAL**, Streamline Pictures (USA), dubbed and subtitled.
- ROUJIN Z**, Manga Entertainment Limited (UK), dubbed.

# ANIME CLASSICS



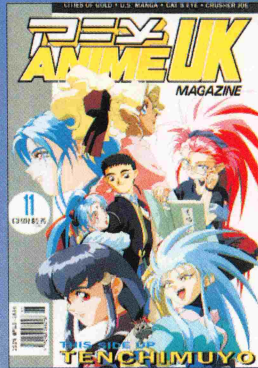
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Series overview: ARISLAN, RG VEDA, GAIARTH; Japanese-Indian co-production RAMAYANA



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U.S. manga, TENCHIMUYO!, Series overview: MYSTERIOUS CITIES OF GOLD. Anime music



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PORCO ROSSO, Homage to Tezuka Osamu, Series Overview: BATTLE ANGEL ALITA, DOMINION 2, US Fandom



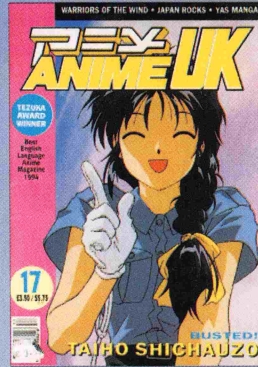
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TAIHO SCHICHAUZO!, The Lion King controversy, Anime Cyberpunk, WARRIORS OF THE WIND,



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Introducing NE-CHAN our new mascot; Enter the DRAGONBALL; Look at POWER RANGERS



NEW SERIES - 2  
The New Generations - MACROSS; Report - GAMES CAPSULE; Cyberbabe - ARMITAGE III



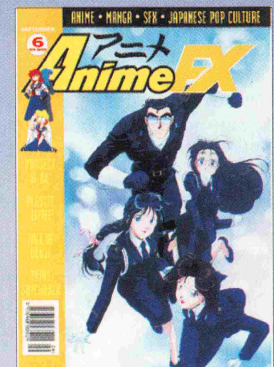
NEW SERIES - 3  
Japan's influence on cartoonists - ASIAN MANGA; SFXPRESS: DAIRANGER; PATLABOR - The Genesis



NEW SERIES - 4  
MANGA IN FOCUS - the girls are back; Deadly KEKKO KAMEN; For kids - DANCOUGAR



NEW SERIES - 5  
Festival report - NO MORE HIROSHIMAS; ANIME on the Internet; Classic SPACE FIREBIRD



NEW SERIES - 6  
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# アニメ AnimeFX



# INCOMING

FEBRUARY 1996

*Industry insider Chrysanthemum Mordin tells us what we have to look forward to in an effort to beat the post-Christmas blues*

## MANGA

### ACADEMY COMICS LTD

**ROBOTECH: ACADEMY BLUES #5**  
**ROBOTECH II: SENTINELS Book IV #3**  
**ROBOTECH: RETURN TO MACROSS #29**  
**ROBOTECH: MORDECAI #1**

### A.M. WORKS

*A new company publishing manga influenced titles*

**ATHENA #3** by Dean Hsieh

### ANTARCTIC PRESS

*This company specialises in dojinski, or non-professional fan manga, and offers a diverse range of titles*

**GOJIN #6** by Takizawa & Kondo: the tale of scientific strangeness in the dark ages continues with Samon's new alien/demon weapon - an atomic bomb?

**DRAGON FLUX #1** by Tyrone Ford: a stirring tale of a young high school student (and martial arts wiz!) thrown into a magical world of dragons and danger.

**MANGAZINE #43**: This issue examines the Dragonball phenomenon, from its first appearances in Shonen Jump to its present-day appearance on U.S. television.

**MAGICAL MATES #1** by Mio Odagi: if you like SAILOR MOON, you'll love this - 13-year-old Rinko is the leader of the Magical Mates, a gaggle of schoolgirls with magical powers and sailor suits!

**VAMPIRE MIYU #5** by Narumi Kakinouchi: Miyu's origin is revealed!

**WARRIOR NUN AREALA BOOK TWO #4** by Ben Dunn  
**GORGON #2** by Chouji Maboroshi. Adult Material

### ARGO PRESS

**STAR BLAZERS #3** by Tim Eldred and Studio Go!

### CPM COMICS

**PROJECT A-KO: VERSUS #3** by Tim Eldred and Studio Go!

### DARK HORSE COMICS

*You can always be assured of quality releases from this company, and a diverse selection of titles that don't rely on violence to entertain!*

**OH MY GODDESS SPECIAL : MYSTICAL ENGINE** by Kosuke Fujishima: Tamiya is about to find out that getting your wishes answered by a goddess isn't always as good as it sounds. **Recommended.**

**LEGEND OF MOTHER SARAH: CITY OF THE CHILDREN #2** by Otomo & Nagayasu

**LEGEND OF MOTHER SARAH: TUNNEL TOWN GRAPHIC NOVEL** by Otomo and Nagayasu: this collects

the first series of this powerful tale. **GUNSMITH CATS #10** by Kenichi Sonoda: The series concludes with a controversial look at the Chicago judicial system.

**YOU'RE UNDER ARREST #3** by Kosuke Fujishima: Miyuki and Natsumi are hot on the tail of a thief who preys exclusively on Tokyo's wealthier residents - but all he steals are *silk panties!*

**GODZILLA #9** by Ishida, Rivera & various.

**3 x 3 EYES #5** by Yuzo Takada: The last issue of this series, and Yakumo and Pai face off against the Gesu one more time. **Recommended.**

### EROS COMICS

*This company occasionally release Japanese erotic comics, but it's definitely all Mature Readers Only.*

**COUNTDOWN: SEX BOMBS #4** by Hiroyuki Utatane

**PRINCESS OF DARKNESS #6** by Yuichiro Tanuma

**SEXHIBITION #4** by Suehiro Gari

**SUPER TABOO #3** by Wolf Ogami

### HAMILTON COMICS

**SUPERHUMAN SAMURAI SYBER SQUAD #0** by Harris & Staton: Yet another Japanese sentai show gets the Americanization treatment, & an American comic adaptation as well!

### MANGA PUBLISHING

**MANGA MANIA #32** by various: news, reviews and manga serials.

**STREET FIGHTER II #16**

### MANGAJIN

**MANGAJIN #53**: Japanese language & popular culture are explored in this extremely useful monthly magazine. This month, a special look at the Hit Products of '85.

### R. TALSORIAN GAMES

**V-MAX Vol 2 #6**: More GUNDAM coverage, gaming material for MACROSS PLUS, a look at Johji (OUTLANDERS, CARAVAN KIDD) Manabe's new series JAMUKA'S BIG ADVENTURE, plus news, reviews and more of the usual.

### VEROTIK

**DEVILMAN #6** by Go Nagai.

### VIZ COMMUNICATIONS

This company are not afraid to take chances, with offerings ranging from shojo (girls') manga & political manga to lighthearted comedy & more.

**FOUR SHOJO STORIES** by Sato, Nishi and Hago: This volume showcases the work of some of Japan's 'shojo' (girls comic) pioneers, and is a refreshingly different form of comic book. **Recommended.** (Broaden your mind!)

**MAISON IKKOKU PART 5 #4** by Rumiko Takahashi: It looks like Kyoko and Yusaku's romance may finally get off the ground, until the arrival of

Yusaku's very cute - and only distantly related! - cousin..

**MANGA VIZION VOL 2 #2** by various: More instalments of OGRE SLAYER, RUMIC WORLD and SAMURAI CRUSADER

**RIOT #5** by Satoshi Shiki

**BIO BOOSTER ARMOR GUYVER PART 4 #4** by Yoshiki Takaya: Sho finally regains the ability to bio-boost; watch out, Chronos, here comes The Guyver!

**FIST OF THE NORTH STAR PART 2 #4** by Buronson & Hara

**NAUSICAA PART 5 #8** by Hayao Miyazaki: Nausicaa finally confronts the mysterious Keepers of the Tomb of Shuwa in the lead-up to the end of Miyazaki's stunning ecological epic.

**Still Recommended**

**RETURN OF LUM PART 2 #7** by Rumiko Takahashi: Introducing Lum's bizarre little cousin Ten! Fiery breath and a temper to match just made Ataru's life that much harder. As if living with an alien princess who can throw bolts of electricity from her fingertips isn't enough!

**SANCTUARY PART 4 #7** by Fumimura & Ikegami : final issue.

**ANIMERICA VOL 4 #2**: All the usual anime news/reviews, expanded to 80 pages! A close up look at the new Manga epic GHOST IN THE SHELL, plus manga from Clamp & Takahashi.

**BATTLE ANGEL ALITA PART 6 #1** by Yukito Kishiro: In the first issue of the new series, Alita finally commences her search for her beloved Doc Ido - but will the leaders of Tiphares let her?

**Recommended.**

**RANMA 1/2 PART 5 #3** by Rumiko Takahashi: Ranma has the tables turned on him when Ukyou fixes Akane up with Ryoga!

**ADOLF: AN EXILE IN JAPAN** by Osamu Tezuka: The second volume of Tezuka's adult tale of the fates of three men named Adolf on the eve of World War Two.

## ANIME : US RELEASES

### AD VISION

**GUNSMITH CATS Vol 1**

Dubbed/Subtitled: The adventures of a trigger happy (and gun proud) private investigator on the mean streets of Chicago who gives new meaning to the phrase 'pistol packin' mama'!

**BLUE SEED VOL 1** Dubbed/Subtitled: Based on the hit manga from Yuzo (3 x 3 EYES, CAT GIRL NUKUNUKU) Takada, BLUE SEED follows the TAC, a super secret Government organisation, in their efforts to combat the Aragami, a race of supernatural beings intent on enslaving mankind.

**THE ABASHIRI FAMILY** Subtitled: From the mind of Go Nagai comes this tale of the most dysfunctional crime family ever - the Abashiri family!  
**LUNA VARGA VOL 1** Subtitled  
**AN ELVEN BRIDE** Subtitled: **Adult material**

### ANIMEIGO

**GENESIS SURVIVOR GAIARTH STAGE 1** Dubbed: Now available in English

## MANGA ENTERTAINMENT

**BOUNTY DOG** Dubbed

**THE GUYVER VOL 2** Dubbed  
**MACROSS PLUS VOL 4** Dubbed: the long awaited next instalment of the best (in my opinion of course!) MACROSS series ever - and one of the best releases around at the moment.

## ORION

**AKIRA** : Now available letterboxed  
**JOHNNY SOKKO AND HIS FLYING ROBOT** Dubbed: Live action, but a classic. The series responsible for my sad life as an anime fangirl! The anime series GIANT ROBO is based on this seminal show, and now 4 volumes are available for your viewing pleasure. Highly Recommended.

## STREAMLINE PICTURES

**ROBOTECH PERFECT COLLECTION: MACROSS VOL 10** Dubbed  
**ROBOTECH PERFECT COLLECTION: MOSPEADA VOL 10** Dubbed  
**ROBOTECH PERFECT COLLECTION: SOUTHERN CROSS VOL 10** Dubbed

## U.S. MANGA CORPS

**CYBERNETICS GUARDIAN** subtitled

**DEMON BEAST INVASION VOL 3** Subtitled

**METAL FIGHTERS MIKU VOL 4** Subtitled

**SOHRUYDEN: LEGEND OF THE DRAGON KINGS VOL 3** Subtitled  
**TENCHI MUYO THE VIDEO**

**SCREENSAVER**: includes a video jukebox with full versions of songs never heard in the West!

**LA BLUE GIRL CD-ROM Vol 1 & 2**: Erotic adventures for your PC.

**Mature Viewers Only.**

## VIZ COMMUNICATIONS

**RANMA 1/2: ONE FLEW OVER THE KUNO'S NEST** Dubbed: Two complete episodes in the mad martial arts weirdness we've come to expect from RANMA!

**OGRE SLAYER 2** Dubbed

## ANIME : UK RELEASES

### EAST2WEST

**RETURN OF THE GOD OF GAMBLERS** : live action. Chow Yun Fat on killer form

**MY FATHER IS A HERO**: superb martial arts action and a tearjerker of a story.

## MANGA ENTERTAINMENT

**GIANT ROBO VOL 1** Dubbed : Young Daisaku's father left him something amazing - a Giant Robot that obeys his every command! Now he uses it in the fight against an organisation plotting to Rule The World - Big Fire!

**GOKU MIDNIGHT EYE VOL 1** Dubbed: Strange sci-fi adventure from the creator of COBRA

**MAD BULL VOL 1** Dubbed: new York cop mayhem. Blood, guts and gratuitous violence galore.

**TIME ETRANGER** Dubbed

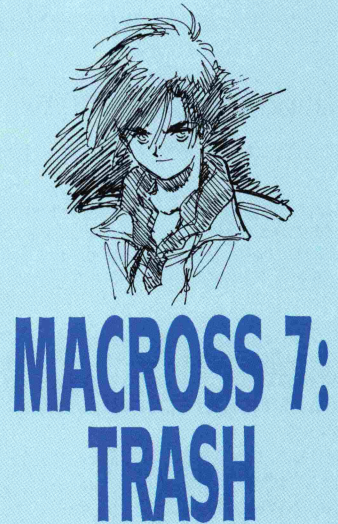
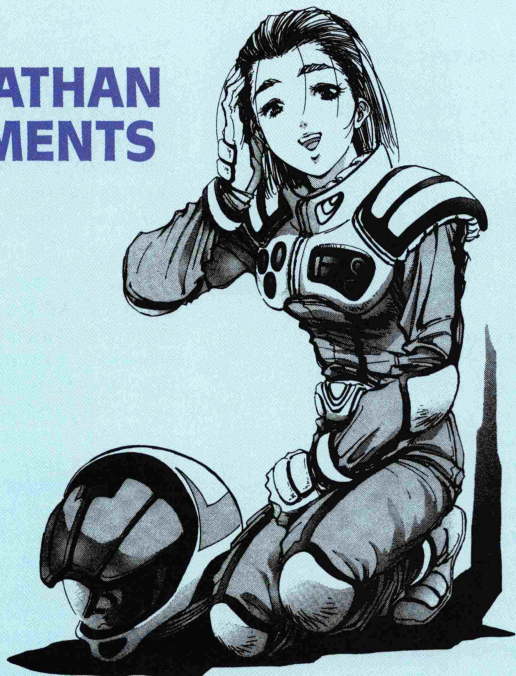
## PIONEER LDCE

**ARMITAGE III PART 2** Dubbed

# MANGASCAN JAPAN



by  
**JONATHAN  
CLEMENTS**



Despite general fan opinion to the contrary, I *like* MACROSS 7. Parts of it may be trite, or even downright annoying, but it has all the ingredients that would guarantee a major following if it ever made it onto TV. That doesn't mean it'll ever be a good buy on video for anyone but a hardcore Mac-fan, but I can easily see its appeal working through a process of osmosis, as a once-weekly session of vegging in front of the TV hooks the audience.

TRASH is the tie-in manga that was originally run in Kadokawa's *Shonen Ace* magazine in 1994. For those

who can't get enough of the Macross universe it's a veritable treasure-trove of inside information, veering as it does away from the main plot of the TV show and into an action-packed side story. The time and setting is still the same, but the male protagonist has as little as he can to do with the exploits of Fire Bomber and the Jenius family. Shiba Mido is seventeen years old, an accomplished airblader (think Rollerball meets Jetman) and a notorious waster in the Mac-7 fleet. Writer Haruhiko Mikimoto has realised that the musical emphasis of the TV show would be difficult to



produce on paper, and thus opts for this sporting diversion. However, it soon becomes clear that Shiba's tale is an important part of the Macross universe.

Family ties play an important part in the Macross saga. Most are familiar with the long history of the Jenius family, which began as a sub-plot in the original MACROSS before coming to the fore in MACROSS 7. But it's only recently, with MACROSS KINGDOM, that the creators have revealed the dark matter of a second family. The relationship of Basara Nekki and Mylene Jenius isn't just a foil for the plot of the TV series, it's the coming-together of two great dynasties. Its revelation after the end of the TV series proper was a masterstroke of plotting on the part of the creators, and is one of the reasons that I find MACROSS 7 so engrossing.

But the intrigue continues in TRASH, when yet another strand is revealed. Shiba has a dark secret. He is the love-child of Maximilian Jenius, orphaned by political expediency and the death of his mother, with a grudge against the father who deserted him. As the events of the TV series explode around him, he refuses to acknowledge his own heritage, and insists on continuing his sporting career. Shiba is the self-appointed runt of the Jenius family, and TRASH highlights the terrible price of being merely 'normal' in an environment of demigods. In one fabulous scene he argues with his girlfriend in front of a giant poster of his half-sister Mylene. When reminded that the same blood flows in their veins, he refuses to comment, claiming never to have met her. He may be a Jenius, but he can't see himself ever becoming a

'genius' prodigy like his half-siblings. The chapter ends with a statuesque shot of Maximilian Jenius himself, dominating the sky of City 7 like an angry god.

The close of the first book promises still more revelations. Shiba's girlfriend Mahana Fabio has a direct line to Max, and is an unofficial line of communication between the two men. Shiba may be good at his chosen career, but as far as the military aristocracy is concerned, their bastard child's inaction is costing the lives of innocent citizens every time he refuses to get behind the controls of a Valkyrie. He has a *duty* to take up the family mantle, but he considers it to be his duty to refuse it. And Mahana herself is a woman with a past. A full decade older than Shiba, and a Valkyrie-pilot who still bears the scars of a tragic accident, she has to confront her own lack of confidence before she can help Shiba with his. A stunning addition to the Macross saga, and yet another example of how much it is possible for us to miss if we rely on the anime releases alone.

**Macross 7: Trash b/w paperback, Series Volume One Story: Haruhiko Mikimoto Art: Various Pub.: Kadokawa Shoten, ¥560 ISBN: 4-04-713105-9**



## GOLF LESSON COMIC

**GOLF LESSON COMIC**  
Monthly, Nippon Bungeisha, ¥300

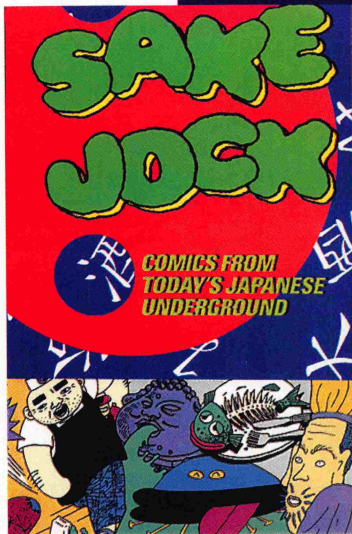
Just when you thought the manga world couldn't get any weirder, GOLF LESSON COMIC hits the in-tray and you wonder if the editor of AFX has finally gone completely mad. But the world is a crazy place, so we'd better tee-off and see what's inside '...the fun way to increase your handicap by reading' (I'm not making this up). Wish fulfillment, fantasy, titillating pictures... oer missus, this is strong stuff. Japan has a chronic shortage of golf courses, and with Sasori Titan-Carbon 11° Drivers retailing at over £100 each (see, I've done my research), the Japanese armchair

golfer could do a lot worse than shell out a mere £2 for the vicarious golfing experience. This manga has something for everyone, just as long as everyone likes golf. The manga staples of cinematic progression and 'slow-motion' shots are an ideal format for golf lessons, and the educational bits are legion. This issue includes *The Laws of Dynamic Balance*, *The Etiquette of the Putting Green*, *How to Knock Five Off Your Score*, *Seiichi Sato's Slicing Workshop*, *Surefire Ways To Get In The Club* and (I am not making this up) *Simple Swinging*.

Less active golfers can enjoy the gripping thrills of *A Caddy's Tale*. In this month's instalment, our Japanese heroine and her golfing beau get soundly trounced by evil golfers from America and China. Can you take the suspense? Then there's *Mr Boggy*, the unfunniest cartoon strip in the known universe, and the side-splitting *Golfman*. In this issue, Golfman tries to chat up a foreign slapper by punning on the words 'birdie' and 'body', only to discover that 'she' is actually one of those long-haired pretty-boy gaijin golfers. Arf arf. I'm tempted to run onto the nearest green with a machine-gun, except someone already has in this issue's page-turning instalment of *The Hole-In-One Murders*. Luckily for the victims, there's even a problem page in the form of *Dr Hiroshi's Golf Hospital*. No doubt all patients are provided with strait-jackets and psychedelic shorts.

From little putters to the oldest swingers in town, this truly has something for every golfer in your family. Next time someone complains that manga are nothing but sex and violence, sling them a copy of GOLF LESSON COMIC for a truly mind-expanding experience. To end with the bad reviewer's ultimate escape clause, if you like golf, you'll like this. If you don't, you won't. So there.



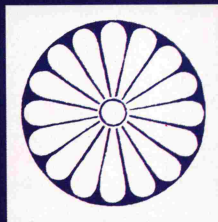


### SAKE JOCK

*Comics from Today's Japanese Underground: Fantagraphics, ISBN 1-56097-188-6, 72pp, b/w, colour covers \$8.95 US, Art and story by Various artists*

If you think all Japanese Comics are about giant robots and girls in sailor skirts (that fall off at the appropriate moments) then this compilation of Underground Japanese comics will be a bit of an eye opener. Just as the U.S. and U.K. have a non-mainstream alternative to the usual bland superheroics, so too do the Japanese - but their's is considerably more alternative than we're used to. The artists featured in this collection have a variety of styles and subject matter - ranging from touching and quiet 'slices of life' and autobiographical fiction' to the tale of a ludicrously strange pervert who prowls public areas inspecting young women's bottoms. Most of the strips are culled from a publication called 'Garo', a magazine dedicated to exposing the work of artists who refuse to bow to the mainstream, and prefer to develop their own visions. This magazine has been publishing for going on 30 years, and it is refreshing to find that there is an outlet for these peculiar little stories - stories which provide a fascinating glimpse into a side of the genre we very rarely see. Not all of the stories in the collection are immediately likeable. Not all of them are particularly well drawn - but there's an almost fiendish energy at work in these pieces, and an irreverence which is refreshing. As more and more of the work of Japanese creators is shown in the West, and more of the many genres which comprise the 'manga' culture make their way into

### Chrysanthemum's Choice



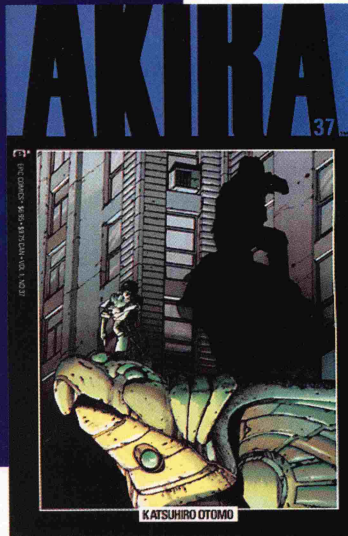
*Chrys Mordin is Comic Buyer for Forbidden Planet - London*

Western culture, the more exciting this hobby of ours becomes - So, if your looking for something a little different, this is the collection for you - but if Demons and Damsels is your cup of tea, you probably won't get much out of this book.

### AKIRA Vol 1 #37

*Marvel Comics, ISBN 0-7851-0167-5 64 pp, colour, Paperback \$6.99 US. Art and story by Katsuhiro Otomo*

It may be almost redundant to review this manga series - almost universally acknowledged as a seminal work, and arguably the work that popularised both anime and manga throughout the U.S. and U.K. - but after 3 long years of waiting, the conclusion to the series is finally seeing print. You may be forgiven for not realising this, as the last English volume appeared three years ago! Marvel Comics, the company best known for guys in tights comics and dodgy TV cartoons, made one of their finest decisions in deciding to print this work, and then one of their worst in allowing it to sit for three years before bringing out the conclusion. But, after one of their longest lulls in comic publishing, Book 6 is at last on our shelves. So, is it worth the wait? Well, to be honest, the ending really doesn't have that many surprises. How many of you would have guessed that poor old Neo Tokyo would end up pretty much razed to the ground? And what about Tetsuo - still turning into large, grotesque and misshapen 'baby' monsters? And of course, the return of one of the best loved special effects ever - the 'Akira Bubble', that manifestation of psychic power that takes entire areas of downtown

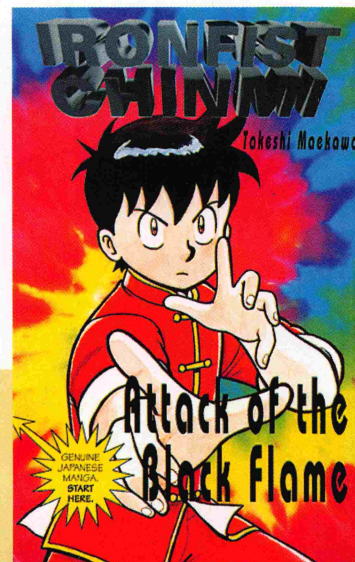


Neo Tokyo with it. However, don't let this put you off reading it - it's everything you exoect and more. The conclusion does have a nail biting element, and the unleashing of the psychic powers of Lady Miyako and the children, and the face off between Kaneda and Tetsuo is beautifully executed The full awakening of Akira, and the final explanation of the project that gave rise to the children, wrap up the series masterfully. The metaphysical side is explored more fully here as well, and the last few issues take on a surreal dreamlike quality in places, as Kaneda comes face to face with the power, not only of the mind, but of the human spirit as well. All in all, a fine (if long overdue) conclusion to this epic series. Also included in ther last few volumes is a series of Akira tributes by Western artists, some of which are surprisingly good! (Although if the reason we had to wait so long for the conclusion was so that Marvel could include these few pages, then I'm not impressed) Sarcasm aside though, the tributes testify to the vast influence this series had on Western comic artists - many illustrators (and writers) have taken the manga sensibilities and sense of style and movement, and combined these with the traditional Western graphic forms to help the evolution of the comic book art form. This cross-pollination of ideas is shown to dramatic effect in the treatment of ideas and images from the tale of Akira, depicted by well known U.S. artists. So, at last, the final part of Akira is on our shelves (and in our homes). Was the wait worth it? Of course it was - the series stands as a landmark in comic publishing, one of the most familiar manga images in the world, and a damn fine read!

### IRONFIST CHINMI Vol 5 : ATTACK OF THE BLACK FLAME

*Bloomsbury, ISBN 0-7475-2100-X, 220pp, paperback, £3.99; art & story Takeshi Maekawa, trans. Jonathan Clements*

It's just over a year since Bloomsbury began planning their innovative manga series and the triumph of IRONFIST CHINMI has paved the way for more releases in 1996. These pocket-sized, Japanese-format paperbacks have been a sell-out smash hit with a massive audience of kids who have no understanding of Japanese traditions but know a good comic when they read one. The only small carping note is that the quality of paper in these two volumes has gone down quite noticeably from the first two books in the series. Luckily the black and white printing is still of high quality, letting all Maekawa's deceptively simple line and tone work show to advantage. Book 5 shows Chinmi coming up alone against a ruthless gang of murderers who have notionly destroyed many villages, but also get their hands on his beloved sister Mei Ling. All the skills he has learned at the Dailin Temple can only help him if he remembers and trusts in his masters' instructions - and even then, despite his own great talent for martial arts, he has to learn that sometimes help is needed against a superior force, and that there is no point winning one battle if you then have no strength left to win the war. Action-packed yet thoughtful, IRONFIST CHINMI is just the book to give to kids weaned on a diet of American superheroes and craving something new; it's also a good introduction to comics for reluctant readers, since it gives them plenty to hold their interest in the pictures while expressing intelligent thoughts and character development in simple, clear language. Older anime and manga fans can enjoy it too, of course, but that's not the main intention.

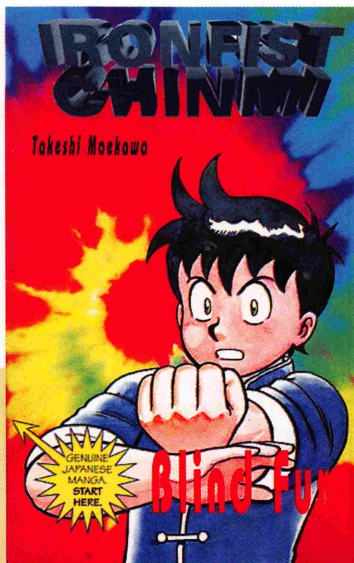


# MANGA SCAN

## IRONFIST CHINMI Vol. 6: BLIND FURY

Bloomsbury, ISBN 0-7475 -2101-8, 222pp, paperback, £3.99; art & story Takeshi Maekawa, trans. Jonathan Clements

One of the most positive and unpatronising portrayals of a disabled character anywhere in comics occurs in this book, where we meet the blind gardener and staff-master Riki, a gentle, joyous and deadly opponent. The English title is an obvious reference to the movie where Rutger Hauer plays a blind combat veteran and may mean more to the older reader than the intended young audience; but it also refers to Chinmi's gradual acquisition of self-control and ability to ignore the outward appearance of things, and to focus on every aspect of a subject, not just the ones he can "see" physically or right away. The book begins, and ends, with Chinmi learning how to beat one of his teachers, and just as importantly, learning that the insight and self-discipline he acquires in learning the necessary skills matter more than who wins or loses, and that the respect his fellow-students and teachers give him depends not on who he beats, but on how he does it and what he learns in the process. Studying at the Dailin Temple would be a wonderful experience for most kids; their tutors neither patronise nor fuss over them, but encourage them to develop their skills as far as they can while demanding that they live up to their full potential. Teachers everywhere should read the series, and in particular this volume! The art is among the strongest in the series to date, with combat scenes well balanced by quieter panels; the full-page picture of a cave full of vampire bats and the sequence where Chinmi sits on a temple porch as the storm rages and watches bamboo whipping round in circles while a tree breaks in the wind are especially good.

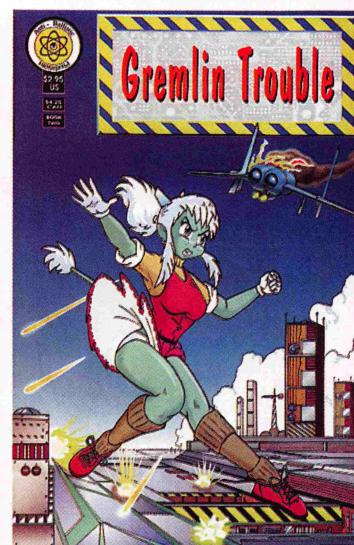
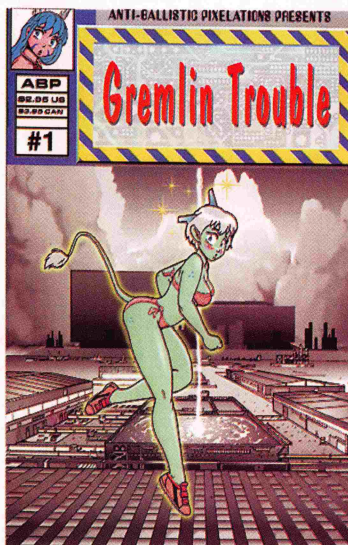


## GREMLIN TROUBLE #1 and #2

Anti-Ballistic Pixelations, 32 b/w pages, colour card covers, quarterly, \$2.95 US; art E.T. Bryan, written by E.T. & Elizabeth Bryan. ABP, PO Box 3698, Seal Beach, CA 90740, USA.

A self-published comic which is obviously the product of years of playing with the characters and ideas and much hard work by the authors and artist, GREMLIN TROUBLE is well produced on glossy paper with varnished cardstock covers, and clearly demonstrates both the benefits and pitfalls of self-publishing. The passion and pride of the creators and their sheer pleasure in their work shines through; a professional publisher might have produced the book less attractively, but on the other hand a good editor would have made the authors think more carefully about the logic of their story and minor details like the odd spelling error, and a good art editor would have sent E.T. Bryan back to the drawing board to redo some of the more uneven panels. It's obvious as you read that there are some pages, panels or even single figures on which huge amounts of love and care have been lavished, while others look less considered, even skimmed. And the artist's use of computer effects sometimes amounts to overkill - for instance, in #1 there's a sequence where a battle mech is shown in nice detail, several inches tall, and shrunk to less than half an inch in the panel below, at which scale the mass of detail that looks so good just above is simply unnecessary and messy. The story of a young stormfairy who turns into a gremlin (of the kind that get in the works - the writers include a fascinating history of gremlins in #2) has ramifications which will hopefully resolve themselves over future issues - why is the Chief Imp in league with one of the human bad guys, for instance, and why have the stormfairies not developed an adequate defence, or at least an early warning system, against him? And why does falling into a vat of toxic waste turn a pretty de-winged fairy into a still-pretty gremlin? Some aspects seem a bit too pat - it's stretching coincidence that kindly old gremlin Cam should invent the idea of heroine Cypher being a 'gremlin princess' to persuade her that life is still worth living even when you can't fly, only to find that not only do gremlin princesses exist (surely a wise old bird like him would have heard of

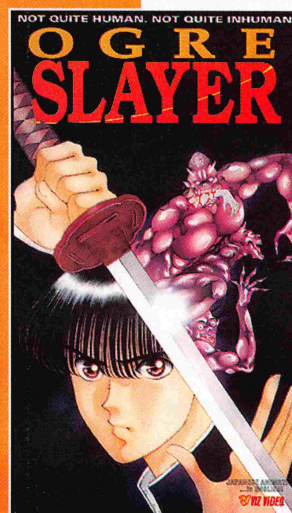
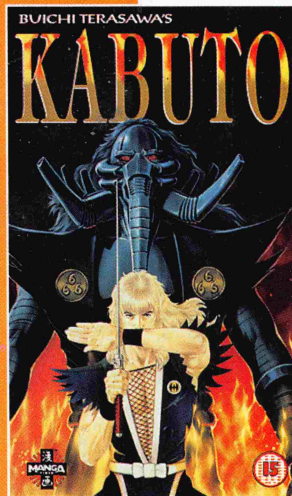
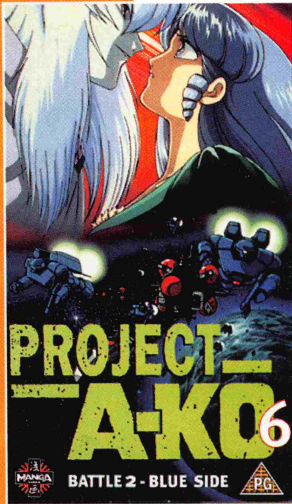
Helen McCarthy reviews  
translated manga and a new entrant in the US  
pseudomanga stakes



the legend?) but - guess what? - they also have wings! But although these aspects really annoyed me, GREMLIN TROUBLE is a brave effort and introduces some variety of theme and style into a genre

which can often seem very tired. Its creators intend to stick to a quarterly schedule and are happy to respond to mail order enquiries at the address above.





# VIDEO SCAN

## U.K. RELEASES

All UK releases are on PAL-VH format

*NOTE: SOL BIANCA from Kiseki and BABEL II VOL 2 from East2West were rescheduled for U.K. release in January 96, but have already been reviewed when first announced.*

**PROJECT A-KO 6:  
BATTLE 2 - BLUE SIDE**  
Manga Video, MANV 1118,  
52 mins approx, English dubbed,  
cert PG

The PROJECT A-KO series can usually be relied on for some healthily ridiculous amounts of destruction, starting with city-sized spacecraft impaling themselves on control towers and working on up. A-KO 6 follows the trend and takes it as far as it can go, as the maniacal C-Ko lays waste to planets, stars, battlefleets - with her sights set on the utter demolition of every universe there is!

Concluding the alternate-reality story that began in GREY SIDE, A-KO 6 begins (after a couple of intentionally confusing prologues) with A-Ko and a newly-resurrected B-Ko preparing to enter Gail's fortress and delete him before he can summon the spirit of Xena into C-Ko's body. They fail, largely due to a mixture of bad luck, overwhelming forces and crass stupidity, leaving Gail to flee the coop in a hidden starship with C-Ko and a smitten B-Ko in tow. A-Ko folds herself into Maruten's cramped ship and heads off in pursuit, as C-Ko's monstrous avatar chews its way through planet after planet, heading for the place where all realities collide. It seems that Gail wants to destroy the multiverse, then re-create it in his own image. But can A-Ko and B-Ko quit arguing long enough to stop him?

It has to be said that BLUE SIDE isn't 'quite' up to GREY SIDE's standard, but it comes pretty close - the problem is that the final part of anything can't help but be a tad disappointing, because of the time spent in tying up loose ends. However, the OAV is still a lot funnier than most anime out there, and contains some wonderful moments: the launch of Gail's hidden ship is very nicely depicted, and the climactic punch-up between A-Ko and B-Ko - in fact 'every' A-Ko and B-Ko, in every universe - is innovative and quite hysterical.

A-KO 6 is good, inoffensive fun; fast-moving and well-voiced. Disconnect your brain and have a damn good laugh.

P.J. EVANS

**KABUTO**  
Manga Video, MANV 1108,  
45 mins approx, English dubbed,  
cert 15

Set in feudal Japan, this Buichi (SPACE ADVENTURE COBRA) Terasawa story begins with swordsman Kabuto returning to the village of Sado. Despite having his suspicions aroused by the sight of three rotting corpses hanging from the town gate like Christmas baubles, he trudges in for a bowl of soup anyway, and learns that the village is under the power of an evil gen, Tamamushi. The old king has died, and his daughter installed in the castle dungeon while Tamamushi and her supernatural army of spider-ninja and robots go about making things thoroughly miserable for everybody.

Unsurprisingly, Kabuto takes offence at this and sets about righting wrongs in typically heroic fashion, slicing up hordes of bad guys while springing about the landscape like a sword-wielding Zebedee. Before long he is involved in a plot to free the princess, and comes into direct confrontation with Tamamushi and her robot-builder henchman, Jinnai. However, neither the queen nor her weasly cohort are entirely what they seem...

KABUTO is a far more serious piece than COBRA or even GOKU MID-NIGHT EYE. Unfortunately, there's a fine line between serious and pofaced, and KABUTO crosses it very early on. The characters are either so indestructible (like Kabuto) or so whiny and pathetic (like everyone else) that it becomes impossible to identify with any of them. The few reasonable fight sequences aren't enough to cover up for the indifferent animation and frankly appalling dialogue, and what should have been an exciting supernatural samurai yarn comes over as stilted and slow, with nothing to recommend it above others in the same genre except the sight of Kabuto sprouting wings for no apparent reason.

There are plenty of similar films out there that do the same job and do it better. KABUTO is not Terasawa's best by a long chalk.

P.J. EVANS

**BOUNTY DOG**  
Manga Video, MANV 1117,  
60 mins approx, English dubbed,  
cert 15

I wanted so desperately to enjoy BOUNTY DOG, but events conspired against it. Director Hiroshi Negishi has plundered shots and sound-effects from his own BEAST WARRIORS, but has included some very arty 'Peter Greenaway' lighting effects. BOUNTY DOG is bathed in a limited palette of yellow/green

colours, while subsurface scenes are all shot in red. The final showdown in the baddie's blue hideaway completes the pattern, and depending on who you ask, it's either clever or stupid. I would argue for the former, since it's actually harder to paint cells in different gradients of the same colour, and it's no cheaper; paint is paint, after all. But accusations of 'cheapness' can still be levelled at BOUNTY DOG, since a lot of footage consists of talking heads and static pans. Things improve in part two, but I think it was a wise move from MEL to stick them both on one tape; no-one would have risked their money twice.

Stealing great chunks of the plot from 2001, BOUNTY DOG also plays like a futuristic X-FILES. Our heroes are a trio of freelance investigators, policing corporate activities, but this isn't too clear in the anime. It was released in Japan after two scene-setting CD dramas, on which there will be more in a forthcoming Japan Rocks, but for now...

Yoshiyuki, Shoko and Kei are sent to the Moon to check up on a suspected military project. Instead, they find out that the Moon is an alien observation post, inexplicably run by the Good Yayoi, and the Bad 'Darkness'. They look familiar because Yayoi used to go out with Yoshiyuki. Oh yes, she used to pop down to Earth every now and then, but her untimely death has upset the Balance of Things. Luckily, there's still a clone of Yayoi kicking around, who teams up with the Bounty Dogs to fight the Darkness (her clone) and her army of (guess!) clones, which makes for very cheap character designs. A lot of this seems to be rooted in the CD drama origins. If all the incidental characters are the same, you only need one voice actress to play them all.

My main objection to BOUNTY DOG are the gaping holes in the background. How can you terraform the Moon? It doesn't have a sodding atmosphere! With a plot that calls for spacesuits intermittently, the atmosphere seems to switch on and off at will. Even if there were an atmosphere, the rotational period would still mean searing daytime heat and piercing night-time cold. And why is the gravity suddenly Earth-normal? As for the good-vs-evil alien set-up, even the writers don't really understand it, finishing with a Dana-Scullyesque 'how weird' voice-over at the end. This could have been a work of pedigree science fiction; as it is, it's a dead dog.

JONATHAN CLEMENTS

## U.S.A. RELEASES

All U.S. releases are on NTSC-VHS format

**OGRE SLAYER**  
Viz Video, VVOS-001, 60 mins,  
English dubbed, not rated; contains

graphic violence and adult situations, parental discretion strongly advised.

Viz are pitching this as 'shojo' anime, but since the manga made its debut in SHONEN SUNDAY, a determinedly un-girls' magazine, I looked for something in the themes and stories to tell me why. But oh dear, it's not much different in its message than UROTSUKIDOJI, though a good deal more restrained in its execution. Humans, especially human women, are in grave and permanent danger from supernatural horrors, which will either rip their heads off and eat them or impregnate them and then rip their heads off and eat them after delivery. You can't reason with or build a relationship with these creatures. Only the human-like child of an ogre mother can save us, and of course, he's a good looking young guy whose particular method of salvation involves hacking the ogres to bits with a bloody great sword - usually after they rip the heads off innocent bystanders. The only way to deal with the terrors of our past is to have a strong, dynamic male murder them for us, and if we question this solution then the deaths and suffering are all our fault. Forgive me if I don't write this one down as a landmark in anime's efforts to extend the female audience.

Still, there are some positive aspects. The portrayal of the everyday suburban Japan invaded by its old mythology is very well done, with nice cleanly-executed design and good detail. Overall the standard of artwork is high; the opening credits run over some gorgeous painting, annoyingly interrupted for frequent blackscreen drop-ins carrying the English language credits. The characters are stereotypes, though, and not helped by the stilted and portentous language they speak; did schoolgirls ever really talk like those in the first of the two stories on this tape? The ogres, though, are mediaeval scroll paintings come to slobbering, repulsive life and by far the best things in both stories.

RORY DONNELLY

### SECRET OF BLUE WATER 1: THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

Orion Home Video/Streamline Pictures Video Comics, 91193, 94 mins, English dubbed, closed captioned, not rated.

The first four episodes of the TV series are edited into a single movie-length story by removal of the repeated end and opening credits. New English language credit sequences have been spliced on, but the original Japanese credits and theme songs are included at the end of the tape.

Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. That's the only word to describe this magnificent TV series. Oh, and magnificent. And funny. And

humane. And heartwarming. And ... oh, insert your own cliches after you've watched it, because you MUST watch it. THE SECRET OF BLUE WATER, aka FUSHIGI NO UMI NO NADIA, is a fabulous creation by a stellar creative team. It shares with the works of Miyazaki that rare ability to redeem the much maligned term "family entertainment". Anyone, of any age, could watch this, have fun and rediscover the spirit of adventure in themselves.

The beauty of the artwork - look at some of those skies, the circus backgrounds, the Parisian quayside, the countryside round Le Havre - is matched by the character designs, and the mecha are a triumph, the funny ones very funny and the serious ones meticulously convincing. At the heart of the whole gorgeous construction is the story of two orphans, one looking to discover the most basic facts about herself - her country, her name, her people - and the other searching for the father whose death he won't accept. Jean is bouncy and optimistic, Nadia tends to introspection, but each finds in the other exactly what they lack, and their friendship leads them into a fantastic adventure.

By the end of the four episodes in this compilation they've been chased by villains after Nadia's only treasure, the jewel she was wearing when sold to the circus as a tiny child, have encountered prejudice and chicanery, have run terrifying risks and discovered that they can trust each other completely; they've also flown in one of the very first functional aeroplanes (Jean's own), been aboard a jetfoil, a US warship and a submarine - all this in 1889! Inspired by the work of early sf writer Jules Verne, combined with the legends of Atlantis and Gainax's own creative genius, THE SECRET OF BLUE WATER is an adventure, a love story and a powerful moral tale about trust, love, friendship and following your star. But mostly, it's great fun

The dub has been vilified in US fandom but I don't quite understand why. The voices are appropriate and the performances good. Jean's accent veers from France to Italy on occasion but that's my one voice beef. The sound mix is distinctly dodgy on the first half of the tape and fine on other parts (a mastering problem rather than a mixing error, maybe?) but the music and soundtrack are lovely. The opening voice over and title sequence are not so good as the Japanese one, but you get that on the tape anyway; and they will convey more to the massive American audience which I hope will buy this tape and encourage more releases of this kind. At \$14.98, THE SECRET OF BLUE WATER: THE ADVENTURE BEGINS is the bargain of the year.

HELEN MCCARTHY

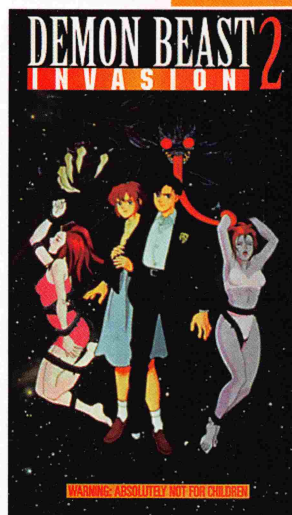
### DEMON BEAST INVASION 2

Anime 18, A18-1312, 45 minutes approx. Unrated, mature readers only

Prepare to read this review. Prepare to start the next sentence. Prepare yourself for the end of this paragraph. Prepare to get really wound up every time a baddie says 'prepare to...' and then doesn't get on with it. Heroes would have much shorter lifespans if their enemies didn't keep on telling them what they're just about to do. But there are plenty of tentacles if you like that sort of thing. The subtitling is a little too vernacular in places, but faithful nonetheless to a lame script and an illogical story. Demon Beasts are (you guessed it) just about to invade the Earth, but, for reasons known only to them, hang around in orbit and send a few tentacle-creatures down to breed a new army with unconsenting Japanese schoolgirls. Why they couldn't just invade *en masse*, God only knows. Ditto for their rationale for leaving at the end. One demon dies so they all go running back home and the Earth is saved. Hurrah!

Another product from the diseased mind of Toshio Maeda, DEMON BEAST INVASION is a disappointment. There is one interesting scene in which a demon is unable to bring himself to kill his human brood-mother, but apart from that there's nothing you haven't already seen done better in UROTSUKIDOJI. Not as well-animated as OVERFIEND, and lacking the witty script of ADVENTURE DUO, it's also missing Masamichi Amano's great music. DBI looks like an earlier, older crack at tentacle porn, but actually post-dates UROTSUKIDOJI. So Maeda has no excuse for such a cock-up. But if you want a good laugh, have a close look at the sleeve. Yes, those girls' clothes have been *drawn* back on, presumably for the American release. And you thought the Japanese were weird...

JULIA SERTORI



#### NE-CHAN'S FAVOURITE

Our mascot's favourite from among this issue's releases is

**THE SECRET OF BLUE WATER: THE ADVENTURE BEGINS**



## DEADLY DREAM WOMEN

Having had expectations raised by a promising sleeve, it was thus all the more disappointing to discover that beneath the nifty title lurks (appropriately enough for this festive season) a major turkey. Things start to fall apart immediately the film begins: the tape isn't letterboxed, but, unfortunately, the subtitles are, meaning the starts and ends of sentences are frequently off-screen. This would be barely tolerable on a film-fair bootleg; on a commercial video, it's simply unacceptable.

The only marginal excuse would be if this was some lost classic featuring amazing martial arts, stunning performances, and superb direction, but *DEADLY DREAM WOMEN* bats a firm .000 there. 'Fast moving action-packed' it most definitely isn't, spending far more time mired in the sort of feeble comedy which (let's be charitable here) is lost in translation. The plot line will be familiar to anyone who's seen the far superior *GOD OF GAMBLERS*: in this case, Cheung Man plays a triad enforcer who suffers amnesia after a blow to the head, and is rescued by a group of nightclub hostesses who gradually realise her importance. Cheung Man, while likeable enough, is not Chow Yun Fat and so *DEADLY DREAM WOMEN* just comes across as a pale imitation. Applause to producer Wong Ching for not stealing from other people, though; he directed *GOD OF GAMBLERS*, so can hardly be accused of plagiarising himself. One suspects that there may be an ulterior motive here, involving the alleged "close personal relationship" he has with starlet Chingmay Yau, who co-stars as the leading hostess. Certainly, keeping her sweet is a justifiable reason for making movies, but it would take two weeks in a four-star hotel with Ms. Yau before I'd even contemplate watching this again.

## MAN WANTED

It was with a sinking heart that I slid the next tape into the VCR, but *MAN WANTED* is a marked improvement - it's widescreen, to start with, so the subtitles are all present and corr... about as correct as can be expected. The two central characters are a gangster (Yu Rong Kwong from *IRON MONKEY*) and an undercover cop from a mob family, trying to bring his friend down. The policeman is played by Simon Yam, which is something of a change for the man, given that he's most famous for playing psychopathic killers in true-life crime shockers like *DR. LAM* — it's a bit like seeing Anthony Perkins playing a romantic

# LIVE & KICKING

by Jim McLennan



DEADLY DREAM WOMEN

lead. His attempt to arrest the target misfires badly, leaving the gangster apparently dead and alienating him from the rest of his family. But is the death permanent? Well, I'm not giving anything away if I say "no", and before long Yam is hurtling headlong into hell as revenge is sought, and we realise why they chose an actor renowned for portraying the 'differently sane'.

This is a solid and meaty drama, benefiting from good performances by the two leads, and once the initial plot is laid out the film twists and turns in a variety of interesting ways. More psychodrama than anything else, there are hardly any slack moments and you reach the end knowing that you've definitely seen a highly competent piece of film-making.

## JAIL OF NO RETURN

Third out of the bag was this men-in-prison drama, set on a 'Devil's Island' style jail, where irredeemable prisoners are sent until the age of sixty. Survival is the only pastime, but it's a risky one as, for example, attempts to supplement the meagre diet result in beatings or worse. There are the standard cast of characters - the vicious governor, the sympathetic warden, the stool-pigeon, the old lag, and the new arrival - but the film delivers enough variety on these cliches to rise above them. For example, the warden is played by Westerner Richard Grosse, a rare extended role for an English speaker in Hong Kong movies. He, and the rest of the cast, all deliver good performances which help overcome the fact that for

much of the movie nothing actually happens. There's an escalating series of brutal incidents, and character development is almost exclusively through these, and the reactions to them - we know little or no background to the inmates or staff. This works both for and against the film, preventing us from prejudice, yet inevitably limiting our empathy with them.

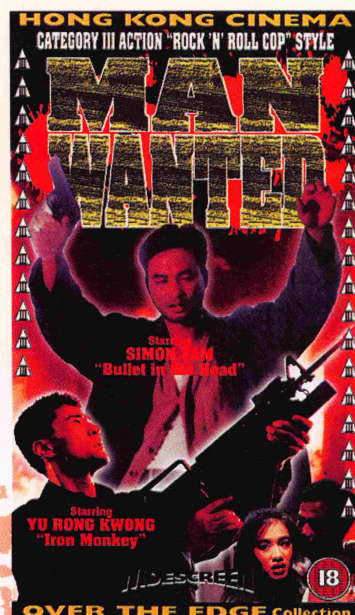
This is not a light-hearted film, with barely a smile to be had in its 90 minutes. Yet despite this, the ending (which is not really a surprise after all that's gone before) is curiously uplifting as the prisoners gain their freedom. Looking back, it's little sequences that stick in my mind rather than the overall movie, but director Ng Doy Yung deserves praise for trying something different. Supposedly based on events at a similar Singapore jail in the 1950s, this is, for me, the best of the four.

## DIE HARDER

The last statement may well have destroyed any suspense over whether or not this film is any good, but never mind. Not to be in any way confused with any Bruce Willis film (as if anybody would!), this is a straightforward and relatively simplistic revenge flick, from the "you killed my brother and you must pay!" school of Hong Kong movies. The target of this revenge is corrupt former policeman Fu, who left for mainland China after the heat got too much, and now runs a karaoke bar there. People are queuing up for their revenge; two civilians whom he framed for murder, the wife of a policeman he killed, the local gangsters who resent him muscling in on their karaoke bars, etc. It all ends pretty much as you would expect, but this is at least half an hour after its stops being entertaining. Perhaps the only interesting factor is the insight into the Chinese version of karaoke, which has professional singers paid to do the singing along while the audience just listens. And if that's the highlight ...

## OTHER NEWS

Made In Hong Kong are bringing out a subtitled and widescreen editions of *ANGELS 2* - while it's nice to see them doing this, it must annoy the hell out of people who paid for the dubbed, pan-and-scanned version. Doing them simultaneously would be better. Also, both *ANGELS* and *ANGELS 2* are slated for laser-disc release, though as yet there is no information on which will be released.





When I was 21 years old, I'd just picked up my first copy of *Anime UK*. When Donald Keene was 21, he was ducking kamikaze planes off the coast of Okinawa, playing Beethoven to bemused POWs and having his picture taken with a rifle in one hand and a Japanese dictionary in the other. He went onto become a translator of international standing, altering Japan's position in world literature forever, and for the better. Keene's name is on a good 20 books on my shelves, and anyone with more than a couple of Japanese works will doubtless have a Keene translation too. He wasn't the first Japanologist, but his contribution to our understanding of Japanese literature paved the way for all that has followed. This magazine wouldn't exist today if Keene hadn't been out there setting an example for the translators of his tomorrow, which is our yesterday. He was the man who brought Mishima's *No Plays* to New York, who translated the *Battles of Coxinga*, and who introduced Osamu Dazai to Western audiences. Most importantly of all, it was Keene who wrote and edited the textbooks that bring Japanese literature to students today.

*On Familiar Terms* is Keene's first chance to speak for himself. He's spent so long attempting to convey the words of Japanese authors to us, that it's taken him 70 years to actually write a book about his own life. It has been inextricably intertwined with the Japanese nation for most of this century, and he has experienced the rough with the smooth. The accolades that came later in life were preceded by the hardships of wartime Japan, when translators were liable to face accusations of 'going native', where best-friends could turn out to be cannibal war-criminals, and where Western ignorance of Japanese literature led universities to believe that 'world literature' stopped east of Greece.

People rarely ask what makes someone become an accountant, plumber or fireman, but say that you are a translator by trade and you are invariably asked to provide an explanation. Keene remains reticent about the formation of his early character, but makes several references to the seemingly coincidental forces that conspired to throw him towards Japan. A chance meeting with a Chinese scholar occasioned by the alphabetic adjacency of their names, the bombing of Pearl Harbour, an off-hand comment by a Japanese POW pacifist and Keene's failure to make any headway with Russian are all cited as potential factors, but one gets the sense that Keene is holding something back. It is a translator's job to render the alien qualities of a nation transpar-

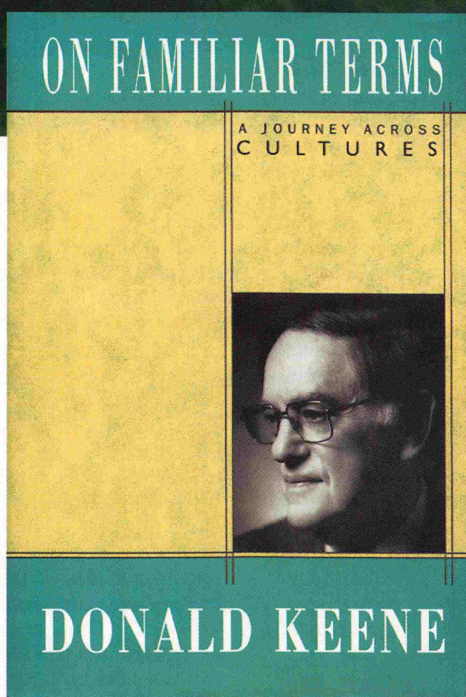
ent, and on occasion Keene does such an effortless job of describing a scene that it's all too easy to forget that the action is taking place in that most foreign of foreign languages. Keene is not an 'author', he is a

teacher, a man who sees his mission as one of dispersing information and understanding throughout the world. For this reason, he is often reluctant to bring his own 'voice' in to comment, preferring instead to report on the people he deems to be important at the expense of his own involvement. Keene was present at many landmark events in Japanese modern literature, but very rarely likes to admit it. His sense of humility will not allow it.

This crosses over into the latter half of the book, where Keene discusses his intense involve-

# On Familiar Terms: A Journey Across Cultures

by Donald Keene



ment with the rich and famous. Through theatre-trips with Greta Garbo, piss-ups with Bertrand Russell and many meetings with the leading lights of Japanese literature, Keene remains

the perfect gentleman. He is never a name-dropper; his recollections of famous novelists like Kawabata and Mishima are further examples of his didactic mission. His anecdotes about their personal lives are not aimed to shock or impress, but to inform us of previously-unseen aspects of their human character. A note of tragedy creeps into the later chapters as death takes more and more of Keene's friends. Japanese authors have a suicide rate

400% higher than the average, but whereas most readers might regard that as a mere footnote, to Keene it is a

terrible fact of life, and the demon that claims all-too-many of his companions.

There is more than one reason why Donald Keene can be described as the Isaac Asimov of Japanese translation. He shares a common era with Asimov, a common upbringing in New York, similar wartime experiences and a similar prolific domination of the landmark works in his chosen fields. He also shares an infuriating refusal to admit just how clever he is. Just as my brows used to knit at Asimov's 'chance meetings' with important SF editors, some AFX readers are liable to get a little confused at the feigned effortlessness with which Keene leaps from world to world. His humility brings with it an unwillingness to discuss the minutiae of translation, and of his own great mind. Scholarships and accolades materialise before Keene as if by magic. The casual reader might gain the impression that people of Keene's distinction are ten-a-penny, whereas they only truly appear once in any generation. Suggest this to Planet Earth's current avatar of Keene-dom, Fred Schodt, and doubtless he too will deny it.

The appeal of Keene's book to linguists should be obvious, but it is also a fascinating work for anyone who makes a habit of reading Japanese literature in translation. Yes, that means *you*. The goalposts haven't moved since Keene's heyday, they've whizzed, but the trials and tribulations of translating Japanese works into English remain virtually unchanged. All except for one important factor: looking back with hindsight, Keene seems filled with doubt as to whether he has achieved anything. He wonders if a Western 15-year-old could name one, let alone three Japanese artists or writers, and laments that we still have a long way to go. I'd be proud to tell him that any 15-year-old AFX reader could name ten off the top of their head.

If you've ever wondered what it's like to have a day-job that is a cross between xenologist and method-actor, open *On Familiar Terms* and see for yourself. For me, Donald Keene used to be the man with the strange accent who was so good at Japanese that he presented the Japanese Open University programmes on medieval Japanese literature. Now he'll always be a lonely figure on a plane, weeping at the beauty of a language that English can never truly express.

*On Familiar Terms: A Journey Across Cultures*, Donald Keene. Kodansha, 1994. £19.99. ISBN: 1-56836-006-1



BOOK  
SCAN

by JONATHAN CLEMENTS

Dear Helen,  
(First letter ... yippee!?)  
As I am living in Dublin, I have noticed the lack of clubs, conventions or shops totally devoted towards manga/anime. Could you please help me out here?  
PS : Keep up the great work.

**SHANE O'REILLY,**  
Foxrock, Dublin, Eire

**HELEN :** *Join the club. The UK has no shops totally devoted to anime/manga either. However, you can get stuff by mail order from Sheffield Space Centre and Forbidden Planet London; subscribe to Japanese magazines and books via Books Nippon, London; and get translated manga by Dark Horse, Viz, etc, and American manga and Japanese dojinshi by Antarctic from any comic shop - if they haven't got it, they can order through Advance Comics or Previews. Go through your back issues for these addresses, or send us an ssae/IRCs for a personal reply and we'll send them on to you direct.*

Hey there, pey people!  
Greetings from the anime ex-wasteland of Minnesota, where Tv anime streaks the airwaves big time! The reports are in :

**TEKNOMAN** - a Saban presentation of Tekkaman Blade, a show I've been looking forward to seeing even if they hadn't brought it over. Hmmm, the voice-acting's OK; the guy what plays D-boy ... wait, not "D-boy", what is it ....Slade?! Anyway, he does a real nice job of portraying the paranoid loner type, and the Tekno-aliens are especially well done also. the show could well be the **ROBOTECH** of the 90s; the only sore point is that blasted announcer. They show the "Tekno-

**ANIMAIL is your forum for comment, debate and discussion on anything anime-and manga-related. We're also happy to try to answer your questions. All letters received at ANIME FX are considered for publication here unless you state otherwise on the letter. If you'd like a personal reply please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope (UK) or two International Reply Coupons (overseas).**

power!" sequence every single time, I can live with that, it's kinda fun to watch, but does Mr. Announcer have to do play-by-play every single time too? "Once again Slade activates the Tekno-power..." oh, shut up!

**SAILOR MOON** - brought to us by DIC (aka Destroyer of Interesting Cartoons). Okay, they didn't quite succeed with **SAILOR MOON** (the destruction, that is) though it weren't for lack of trying, what with the outrageously (intentionally?) bad voice acting and the dumbing-down of certain plot points, like when Darion (Tuxedo Mask, y'all) is dying from a Negaverse wound and Serena (what we call Usagi now) cries "Darion, don't go!" (DIC's Rule #1 : Death Does Not Exist.) Yet, for all the tampering, they can't snuff out the overall charm and wierdness of the series, it's just so campy.

**DRAGONBALL** - YEAH, WE FINALLY GOT **DRAGONBALL!!** And wouldja know, they're being pretty damn faithful to the original; a classic deserves no less, of course. Other than refitting it to pass the most basic American standards, it's the real deal; Goku's name is Goku and not some **WARRIORS OF THE WIND** castoff, all references to death are still there, whatever isn't outright nudity (like Bulma's camper scene in, er, episode 7, is it?) is generally left alone ... you know that part where Chi-Chi (known to us as

"Chi-Chi") is being chased by a dinosaur, and she uses her helmet

thingy to decapitate it and fry it to a crisp ...yes, they left that in too! By the way, you gotta hear Chi-Chi's voice, and Oolong's, and Pilaf's, there's just a wealth of insane voices here. I thought Mel Blanc had re-entered the room! This was bestowed upon us by a new team called Funimation. I am definitely going to check them out in the future.

Tv anime is alive and well in the USA, let's hope it and your magazine hang around a good long while. See ya, pey people!

**ROB HERTWICK,**  
East Grand Forks, Minnesota, USA

**HELEN :** *Oh boy, a new way of reading the katakana for A NI ME on our logo! Well done Rob, I thought I'd heard them all ... but I'm glad to know that anime on TV is going down well in the USA. Maybe now our TV stations in the UK will begin to take notice. 1996 - the year DRAGONBALL hits UK TV? We can but hope ....*

Dear ANIME FX,  
I was just wondering whether the **DRAGONBALL** books will ever come out in English? Next, if an animated movie comes out in America, do the English change it so that it has an English accent and not American? I have recently bought the **STREET FIGHTER II** Animated Movie and I would like to say it's dope, the art for the characters is perfect and I give it ten out of ten. Who are the people who translate the anime into English and what is their address, as I would like to write to them? Will **RANMA 1/2, SAMURAI SHOWDOWN, FATAL FURY, DRAGONBALL Z** and **SLAMDUNK** ever come out in this country? If so, when? If not, why not? Because I would have thought that if they are out in the States all they have to do is transfer it o to an English videotape which wouldn't be all that hard, and I am sure that they would make quite a lot of money. Will a new series of **GUYVER** ever come out, and a part 3 of **DEVILMAN**, and an animated movie of **MORTAL KOMBAT**? Sorry this is so long, and well done for your fine work on ANIME FX.

**BARRY HAYCOCK,**  
Aldershot, UK

**HELEN :** *Let's start with the easy questions ; anime is translated by lots of different people. Every non-Japanese company which releases anime in the West hires its own translators. So there is no one address you can write to to contact the translators of every single anime tape. What you'd have to do is find the tape you like, look on the label for an address or phone number for the company that releases it, and send a letter to the translator of whatever title it is, care of that company. For a Western Connection or Kiseki release, chances are that our own Jonathan Clements has done the translation, and you can write to him care of this magazine. Don't forget to enclose a stamped selfaddressed envelope so he can write back to you. As for UK releases of movies already dubbed in the USA, they are usually not redubbed; Disney didn't redub **POCAHONTAS** into English accents, did they? But a title which has been subtitled might be redubbed, or if the UK company can't reach an agreement with the US company about using their version, they might redub it.*

*The difficult questions next : nobody can say that a particular title will never come out in any country. It all depends if a company in, say, America or Britain is prepared to pay the Japanese company which owns it enough money for the right to release it. If it's out in America, a UK company can't just copy the US tape, they have to get permission from the Japanese company to make a British release. The answer is that **RANMA, SLAM DUNK, DRAGONBALL** or any other title might come out over here, but until a company buys the right to release it, nobody can say when that will happen. The same applies to whether there will ever be another **GUYVER** anime series or another **MORTAL KOMBAT**. It's possible they might be made but until someone decides to actually do it, nobody can say when! And Go Nagai has always intended to do a third **DEVILMAN OAV**, but no firm plans have been announced yet; and the first **DEVILMAN OAV** came out many years after the TV series, so a long delay is possible.*

Dear Helen,  
I'm setting up an all-female anime club called **ANIME BABES**. I'm fed up with the treatment of female otaku, we're always the minority, and so I decided to take a stand and set up an all-girls club. I've recieved my fair share of sexism, no doubt you have too, and it really isn't on. with **ANIME BABES** I hope to change all that and to build up a group of female followers I handed out some flyers at ReCon and everyone we gave leaflets to commented on what a good idea it was, and how they'd love to join. I even had several males ask if they could be honorary members - but no such

**Left: Zaxxon and Robot guard ( GENESIS SURVIVOR GAIARTH )**

luck! If they weren't so sexist in the first place there'd be no need for this. Besides that though, we want to get 'softer' anime released over here, and this shouldn't be a problem if we build up a steady following. So I'd like your help and support. I'd be really grateful if you'd mention us in your next issue. We really need some media attention to get us started, and I feel there is no better way than via a piece in AFX. Wishing you health, happiness and prosperity.

**LISA MUNNS,**

"Fingle", 4 Trevallyn Road, Launceston, Cornwall, PL15 7HN, UK.

(Address printed to allow female fans to contact Lisa regarding ANIME BABES.)

**HELEN:** *Lisa's letter arrived after last issue, with its news piece on ANIME BABES, had gone to press, but some of our female readers may have missed the news so I thought I'd print it here. Good luck with the club, Lisa.*

Dear Helen,  
Thanks for publishing my earlier letter. I have to correct a mistake I made: MILA is ATTACK No. 1 not ATSTAKU No. 1! That happened because I found the title in a huge list of anime releases and facts, To get combinations like TT or PP the Japanese use TSU with a size decrement (70-80% of full size). The katakana TSU is often a little smaller than other characters and the font size of the list was tiny, so it was hard to read clearly!

I think the view that 'anime is for children' is too well known on BC-stations; for children there are many, but if you want good entertainment (i.e. Millennium Queen; it's rather good) you haven't a wide choice. How is the relation to anime in the UK? (I'm only able to receive Super Channel.)

You included a little mistake in my address - it's Alt-Tempelhof, not Alt-Templehof (a little bit too english!) but I don't think it will grow up to be a problem (in spite of the German Post).  
Bye,

**STEFAN HEINZE,**  
Berlin, Germany

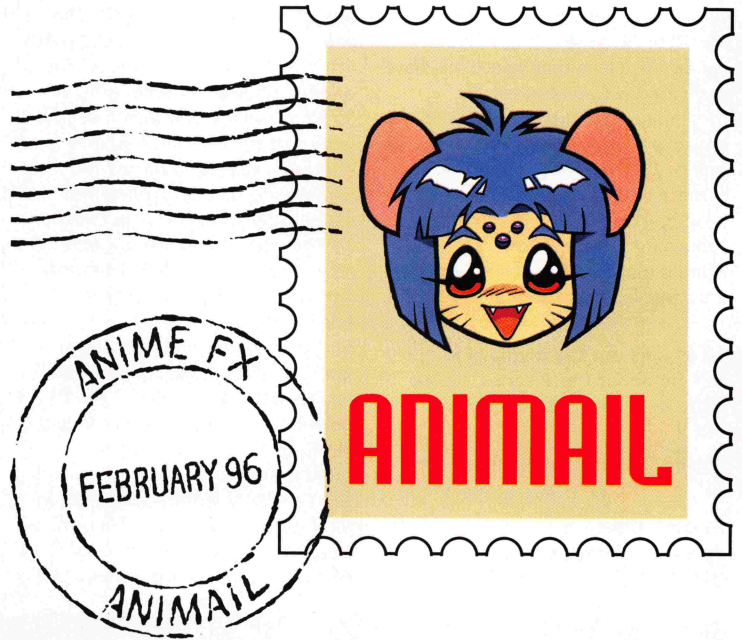
**HELEN:** *I hope you get lots of letters from other fans in response to your last letter. I too often make mistakes with kana transliteration in tiny print - those little tsus are very awkward! Alas, here in the UK we have a lot less anime on broadcast channels than you do in Germany. As I write, the Sci-Fi Channel is showing ROBOTECH and G-FORCE, and ULYSSES 31 is being repeated - but all in the early mornings or afternoons, 'childrens' viewing' time*

*in this country. We still have a long way to go before anime is accepted in the mainstream of entertainment in Britain.*

Dear ANIME FX,  
I have just finished watching vol 1 & 2 of the English dubbed version of EL HAZARD: THE MAGNIFICENT WORLD. It was created by the "Dynamic Duo" (Mr. Hiroki Hayashi and Mr. Ryohei Tsukimura) who also created the TENCHI MUYO series. This wacky new action-adventure packed romantic comedy is (in my opinion) better than TENCHI MUYO! (No offense to those TENCHI fans, 'cause I'm also a fan of TENCHI MUYO!) After watching these volumes I've decided to collect both the dubbed and subtitled versions of all the episodes. (There goes my secure Swiss bank account plus my allowance, but it's worth it anyway!) I can't wait to watch the remaining episodes!

My favourite chara (or one of my favourites) is Makoto's "cross-dressing" chara, Princess Fatara. She's - uh...I mean he's so cute! I just like *kawaii* girls! Some charas remind me of TENCHI, like Arere reminds me of Sasami, Shera-Shera reminds me of Ryoko and Ura reminds me of Ryo-Oh-Ki! Thank you so much for the article and interview on this great series in issue #5! More power! It's a thumbs-up!

Also, SAILOR MOON has been showing here since 1994, and the new series, SAILOR MOON R, started in November 1995. It's in Filipino and the names have been changed a little (eg Usagi is Bunny). Sometimes some of our big shopping malls have SAILOR MOON products and fashion shows. Anime is slowly getting 'hot' here and I hope you can help us Filipinos to promote Japanese animation.  
Sayonara,



**JOHN JASPER GUCE,**  
Makati City, Philippines.

**HELEN:** *Those girls get everywhere, don't they? Any Filipino fans out there who want to promote anime and manga, keep writing to your local TV stations and ask them to show your favourite titles, but also make contact with other fans all over the world; have your name placed on our pen pal list, write to other fans and to fanclubs and fanzines and get together! Together we can present anime positively and proudly all over the world.*

Dear Helen,  
Hi! It's an 11-hour flight from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to London so this letter has travelled a long way to get to you and I hope it won't go unheard. I'm 16 and I've followed your magazine since its first new series issue. I'd like to address my congratulations on an X-cellent job well done!

I've not seen much anime. All I've seen is RG VEDA, HEROIC LEGEND OF ARISLAN, ONCE UPON A TIME (Windaria), ODIN, AKIRA (!), and most of the ROBOTECH series. However, I've written to ask you about something much older than these new animes: GATCHAMAN (aka Battle of the Planets, G-Force).

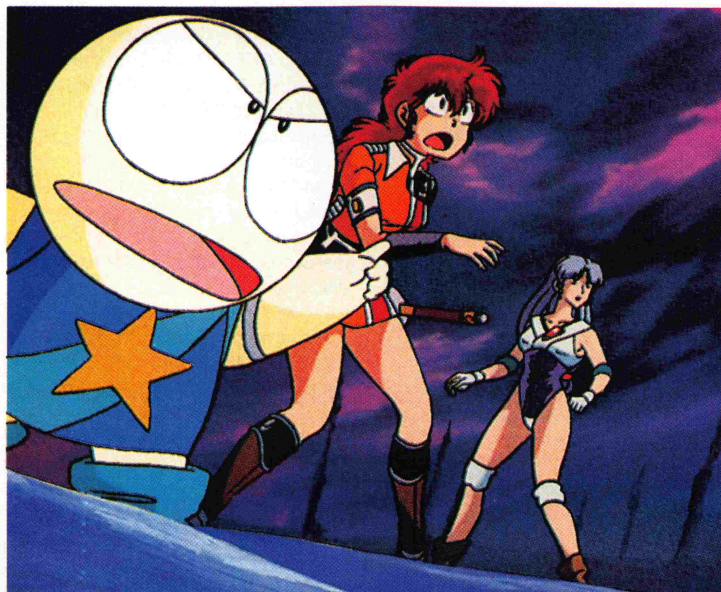
From what I've picked up, GATCHAMAN began in 1972, slashed and dubbed in around 1978 into BATTLE OF THE PLANETS and was redone again in 1986 as G-FORCE. And I consider it was the best piece of television in the 80s. I've seen both BOTP and G-FORCE, and much can be said of their differences. For instance, the humour in BOTP was, er ... quick and witty. G-FORCE had some amount of character emotion, and you can actually feel them growing up from season to season (we had three over here).

Steve Kyte (A-Z OF ANIME) mentioned that the 'hack-jobs' missed out a lot of footage cut from the original series. As a dedicated fan of G-FORCE, I'd like to know exactly what I was missing!! What was it that needed to be 'heavily cut', to and I quote, "render it 'suitable' for Western consumption"? C'mon, I've seen AKIRA. What could be tougher than that? Or am I underestimating GATCHAMAN? Please tell me.

Also, what were GATCHAMAN II and GATCHAMAN FIGHTER? Did these ever make it to the West? What were they about? According to Kyte, there is also a new OAV series released in 1994. Is this an entirely new piece of work? How close to the original? What is that about then?

In closing, I'd just like to lay down proof of my dedication to this series: I have 75 episodes recorded on video, in almost perfect condi-

**A-KO THE VS: BATTLE 2 BLUE SIDE** Left to right: Maruten, A-KO and B-KO



tion ... And, well, even I agree with Mr. Kyte that their rendition of the series wasn't all that good, so I have dedicated six years of my life (beginning at 10) to rewrite and improve the series. My dream is to one day animate my revised version (I mean, those numbered t-shirts have got to go!) at the same time remaining faithful to the original. And I'll make sure no-one ever hack-jobs and Japanese anime ever again!

To anyone out there who is as crazy as I am about these series, please write in! I'll be glad to answer!

Thanks, Helen. Sayonara!

**ALISHA EMA,**

Selangor, Malaysia.

**HELEN :** *Alisha's full address is in*

*atrical release film in 1978. The new GATCHAMAN OAV series takes up the story some years after the original ended; the team have suffered a tragedy and have been living apart for a while, trying to lead ordinary lives. Then an old foe revives and they are called into action again - with a new member. The animation and stories were all new, done to very high standards and with some great designs. Condor Joe was always my favourite, and in his new 90s version he's even sexier! (And he still has an attitude problem - you'd think death might have made him a bit more reasonable, but no chance!) We are hoping to run a big GATCHAMAN feature sometime in the future but it's such a huge subject that it takes quite a bit of research; and, as always with old*

books. The way you put the information, pictures and designs are well presented, particularly the letter column. The cover stands out on the shelves when I look for it in the shops. I used to buy a magazine called A-CLUB (AnimeClub) in one of the record shops in Chinatown in London, which is quite similar to your magazine. Unfortunately it's in Cantonese.

At present I am doing a GNO Art & Design course at Intermediate level, which involves a lot of work, and the Mocks exam will be in December. (Wish me luck!) I hope to learn more skills on drawing, and using different techniques too. I hope to get a good job which involves designing things such as magazines and things related to the anime. I'd be grateful if you could give me any advice on this.

Thanks for reading my letter. All the best,

**KERRY CHU,**

Stevenage, Herts., UK

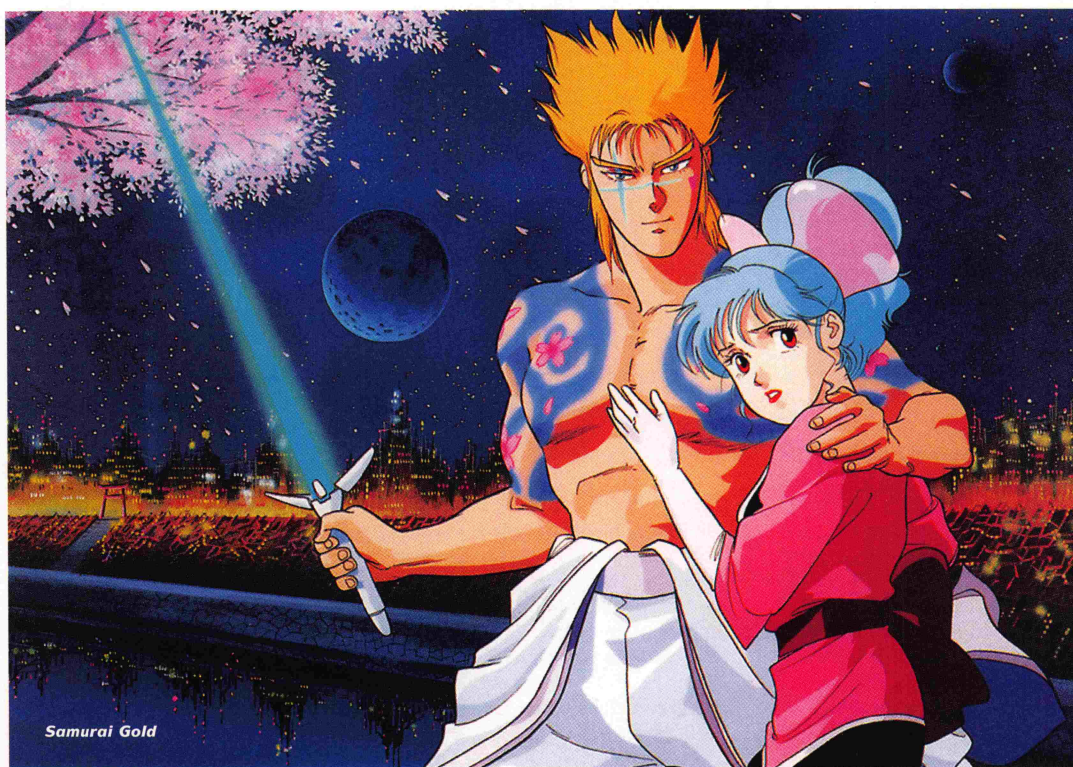
**HELEN :** *Thanks for the Christmas card, Kerry, and for your kind words. It's nice to please some of the people some of the time! And I hope the exams went well. To succeed in any kind of art or design career it's best to get as many basic skills as you can; learn to use computers, DTP packages, many graphics packages as you can, study different kinds of design and set your sights wide. There may not be enough work just on anime-related stuff to keep you in a job, but if you are get a good training and work hard you will be able to design anything, including anime and manga material. Every kind of design work helps you gain more experience and improve your skills. However to ensure you've got the best chance of getting the kind of work you want, put together a portfolio of your own ideas and samples of the way you would design articles and features on anime and manga - your college will help you with this. And start now making a list of publishers who bring out the kind of magazines and books you want to work on, so that when your studies are complete you can contact them and make appointments to show them your portfolio and talk about perhaps working for them.*

*Anime on UK TV is something I've been pushing for ages. Unfortunately TV companies can be slow to react to new ideas or to take risks. I think the late-night screenings on Channel 4 have been reasonably successful, but the trouble is they are on so late at night, and they are all the same kind of material you can buy in the UK already - none of which was made for TV. I think you're right that TV series will widen the market because they are made to aim at wider audiences.*

*At present I don't know of any plans to release more STREET FIGHTER anime in the UK. Maybe if you write to Manga they can tell you more; but as soon as there is an announcement we'll print the news!*



*And finally, a message for U.K. reader LAWRENCE LOMAS : Lawrence, you emailed us with several questions but we can't get a reply to you as our server keeps telling us 'message cannot be sent'. Please write or email your message again with a snailmail address so we can reply.*



Samurai Gold

*this issue's penpal column - come on, all you GATCHAMAN fans, write to her! I'll just give you a few answers to be going on with, because there is so much detail in GATCHAMAN that you really need to find someone who can help you see all the original Japanese episodes. What could they cut? Well, how about Joe (the Condor)'s death and return? As for why it was unsuitable for American TV, search me, but American TV does have very rigid censorship standards and back in the 70s and early 80s mass media in the USA weren't always noted for their liberal and adventurous attitude! The first TV series (1972) had 105 episodes. The two later GATCHAMAN TV series are usually known as GATCHMAN II (1978, 52 episodes) and GATCHAMAN FIGHTER (1979, 48 episodes) and continue the team's adventures. There was also a the-*

*shows, picture sourcing is a problem. Until then, I hope lots of other GATCHAMAN fans write to you. What fun you're going to have learning about the Japanese original and telling them about your own version! And have you ever thought of doing 'your' GATCHAMAN as a dojinshi - a fan manga - or as fan fiction? Lots of people do this, both in Japan and in the West - it's another way of sharing your enjoyment of the shows you love, as long as it's not for distribution or profit and doesn't infringe the series' copyright.*

Dear Helen and everyone at AFX, After reading issue 8 of AFX I thought it was brilliant! I got introduced to your fab magazine from a computer games magazine, SUPER PLAY, in the ANIME WORLD section. It has the latest news on videos, soundtracks as well as

Will the UK ever consider viewing more anime on TV, such as RANMA 1/2, PRETTY SOLDIER SAILOR MOON, CREAMY MAMI and other TV series? Do you think animated cartoons like CYBER CITY haven't been successful in the UK? If so, why don't they view more anime? It would bring in more audience of all ages that may show appreciation, and discover what anime is all about instead of showing ignorance and discrimination (maybe).

Are there any plans from Manga Video to release part 2 of STREET FIGHTER II THE ANIMATED MOVIE in the future? Lastly, will they release some OAVs of the STREET FIGHTER TV series (recently viewed in Japan on TV) in the UK? I know the record shop in Chinatown sold some OAVs of the TV series, but it's in Japanese.

## WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS

Some of our recent contest winners are listed below

### QUEEN OR GODDESS CONTEST - ISSUE #6

The answer was, of course, Ryouei Tsukimura. The Belldandy cel goes to **Donny Sung** of Altrincham, Cheshire, UK, and the El Hazard cel to **Kara Griffin** of Gosport, Hants, UK.

### HONG KONG FOEY CONTEST - ISSUE #6

The answer was Jackie Chan. The winner is **Martin Pay** of Chelmsford, Essex, UK.

### PEACHY KEEN WEDDING PEACH CEL CONTEST - ISSUE #7

This was quite a tough one; we wanted you to work hard because cels from the hit series LOVE MESSENGER WEDDING PEACH were the prizes. The answers to the five questions are:

- 1) Sailor Moon's real name is Usagi Tsukino, and she is also the avatar of the moon princess, Serena.
- 2) She is the missing princess in EL HAZARD, younger sister of Queen Lune Venus.
- 3) Miyuki Kobayakawa and Natsumi Tsujimoto are the partners in TAIHO SHICHAUZO.
- 4) Urd is the eldest Goddess sister.
- 5) Momoko Hanasaki is Wedding Peach's real name.

The winner of the cel with background is **Barry Fletcher** of Ilkeston, Derbyshire, UK. The four cels without background but with drawing go to **Leonor Pinela**, Lisbon, Portugal; **Stuart Gale**, Chichester, Hants, UK; **Laura Watton**, Halesowen, West Midlands, UK; and **Craig Birchall**, Billinge, Lancs., UK.

Many thanks to Mr. Fujii at KSS and Peter Evans of Sakura Studio for the prizes.

### PIONEER TAPES DRAW - ISSUE #7

The following readers won tapes courtesy of Pioneer

TENCHI MUYO : THE NIGHT BEFORE THE CARNIVAL : **Andrew Hicks**, Dublin, Ireland; **Wing-Hang Kong**, Farringdon, Sunderland, UK;  
**Amanda Dillon**, Greenock, Scotland;  
**Philip Metcalfe**, Stroud, Glos., UK; subscriber 541, **Ihsan Alnasrawi**, Bradford, W. Yorks., UK.  
 KISHIN HEIDAN 3 : **Patrick Feijt**, Utrecht, Netherlands;  
**Jonathan Baddeley**, Newcastle under Lyme, Staffs, UK;  
**Clare Phillips**, Ferndown, Dorset, UK; subscriber 460, **Martin Russ**, Ipswich, Suffolk, UK; subscriber 457, **Bill Moore**, Aberyswyth, Dyfed, UK.  
 KISHIN HEIDAN 4 : **Keith Paterson**, Dalkeith, Midlothian, Scotland;  
**Lee Summerfield**, Guildford, Surrey, UK; **Joseph Dowland**, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear, UK; subscriber 263 **William Hayman**, Darlington, Co. Durham, UK; subscriber 278.  
**Ben Bruyneel**, Rotterdam, Holland..

Many thanks to Pioneer and Cathy Beck for the prizes.



### APRIL IN PARIS

Courtesy of ORION HOME VIDEO and STREAMLINE PICTURES, twenty-five lucky readers will win Vols 1 and 2 of THE SECRET OF BLUE WATER! This is the US release, in **NTSC format**, English dubbed, and each tape has 94 minutes of Gainax genius for you to enjoy.

All you have to do to win one of these two-tape sets is to put your name and address on a postcard and send it to APRIL IN PARIS, ANIME FX, 70 MORTIMER STREET, LONDON W1N 7DF, UK, before March 1st 1996. The first twenty cards out of the hat on that day are winners. The other five sets will go to five AFX subscribers whose numbers are drawn at random. So subscribers have two chances to win!!

Many thanks to Jonna Winnicki of Orion for her kind assistance.

### LITTLE WOMEN

The extremely super SUPER DEFORMED DOUBLE FEATURE is the prize in this contest, courtesy of Anime Projects who have given us three **PAL format** tapes. To win one of them, all you have to do is name any two of the shows parodied in the two features on the tape. Send your answer and your name and address on a postcard to LITTLE WOMEN, ANIME FX, 70 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7DF, UK, to reach us before 31st March 1996.

Thanks very much, Nigel Fisher of Anime Projects, for these great tapes.

### GUNS & LOVERS

Two superb boxed sets (in **PAL format**) of GUNBUSTER and two of MACROSS II/CLASH OF THE BIONOIDS from those nice guys at Kiseki Films go to the four lucky winners of this contest. All you have to do is answer one very simple

question which any otaku can handle: Which real-life translated manga supremo was the inspiration for Noriko's beloved Smith Toren in GUNBUSTER? Send the answer, with your name and address, on a postcard to GUNS & LOVERS, ANIME FX, 70 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7DF, UK, to arrive before 1st March 1996, when the first four cards out of the hat win a set of tapes. If you have a preference for one or the other, put that on your card too, otherwise winners will be allocated a set at random.

Simon Gale at Kiseki arranged this for us - many thanks, Simon!



### DESIGNER LABEL

Want a *really* exclusive outfit? Enter this comp. and wear a French label unobtainable in any shop! Kaze Animation make very special t-shirts which they give to just a few people as presents. Steve and I have one each, and Cedric Littardi of Kaze kindly gave us another to offer to one of you! The front just has the KAZE logo in black on white, but the back is a sexy pic of Dark Elf



Pirotess from LODOSS WAR which will have people swooning in the street as you pass by! To win this strictly limited edition French designer garment, send your name and address on a card to DESIGNER LABEL, ANIME FX, 70 MORTIMER STREET, LONDON W1N 7DF, UK, to arrive by 1st March 1996.



**REMEMBER - THE CLOSING DATE FOR ALL THESE COMPETITIONS IS 1ST MARCH 1996!**



# FANSCENE



## CONVENTIONS AND MEETINGS

**We list all conventions, club events and meetings with a large anime/manga content providing we are notified at least 3 months in advance.**

**AFX do not run these events, so please contact the addresses listed for further information.**

## EUROPE

EVERY MONTH - **London Anime Club** meets at the Daiwa Japan Foundation; talk to Japanese and gaijin fans, see hot new anime! Details from **Dragon, 32a Station Road, London NW4 4PN, tel 0181 202 9038 evenings.**

July (date tba) **MINAMICON 2, 15 New Road, Fair Oak, Portsmouth, Hants., SO50 8EN, UK.** Second one day convention by MINAMI ANIME. "the club with added KAWAII". Last year's con was a blast, don't miss out this time. Send ssae/IRCs for details.

**Oct 6 FACTS V, c/o Emmanuel van Melkebeke, Parkplein 5, Gent, B9000 Belgium.** A wide range of sf/fantasy-related material, anime and manga at this friendly one-dayer. Highly recommended by AFX's Helen McCarthy & Steve Kyte! Send IRCS for details.

## USA

**Mar 2 FANIME CON 96, PO Box 642028, San Jose, CA 95164-2028, USA, email abunai@IBM.NET, no further details as yet.**

**Mar 8-10 KATSUCON 2, Katsu Pro. Ltd., 1827-2 Grayland Street, Blacksburg, VA 24060, USA. Tel (001) 540 953 1699.** Many US/Euro guests, innovative programming, friendly convention.

**May 31 - June 2 PROJECT A-KON 7, 3352 Broadway, Ste 470, Garland, TX 75043, USA, email phoenix@pic.net.** Lots of US guests, big dealers room, much fun!

## FAN NEWS

### DOJINSHI GO DUTCH

ORANDA NO MANGA is a new organisation dedicated to improving contacts between Dutch and international anime-style illustrators and dojinshi creators, in the hope of speeding up developments in both the quality and quantity of fan



manga produced in Holland and in Europe as a whole. Organiser Mike says that he'd like "anyone who is seriously trying to perfect a Japanese style of illustrating or comic drawing to send me copies of their work, so we can exchange ideas, techniques and news from all around the non-oriental manga-producing world". Write to Mike at **Oranda No Manga, v. Metmanst. 28, 2282 G.N., Rijswijk, Holland; or email IO456156@student.io.tudelft.nl**

### BNF INTERVIEW

One of the biggest of America's Big Name Fans, Steve Pearl, has given a two part interview to be printed in the first issues of MANGA ZEN and SHYGIRL, due from Zen Comics in February. Pearl has been moderator of the rec.arts.anime.info newsgroup on the Internet since its inception in 1992 but his experience in moderating anime groups on the 'net goes back to 1990; his information compilations on the 'net are referred to (though not always acknowledged! by many researchers, both fan and pro.



Anyone interested in US fandom or the Internet's role will find the interview a rewarding read.

### WEB STRANDS

Martin Hopley of Reading, Berks., UK, has found the following Web pages which might be of interest to other fans with Web access.

**AD POLICE WEB PAGE :**  
<http://hops.cs.jhu.edu/~vincie/adpolice.html>

**PRISS WEB PAGE :**  
<http://www.cs.ubc.ca/spider/edmonds/anime/BGC/priss.html>

**NENE WEB PAGE :**  
<http://www.ieway.com/~pen-nyz/nene.html>

## FANZINE FILE

**We review all fanzines sent to us provided they have some anime/manga content; but please note, faneds, it takes 2-3 months for a review to appear because of print schedules, so it won't make your zine an overnight sensation!**

### THE MANGA PLAYGROUND 5

One of our favourite treats arrived



just too late for review in issue #10; coverdated Sept/Oct 95, TMP 5 continues Martyn Brown's four current manga strips. His artwork gets more assured with every issue - turning out thirty pages a month certainly counts as drawing practice - and while his drawing isn't perfect (despite its seductive individuality) his understanding of the style and spirit of manga art and his ability to merge it with his own quirky, uniquely British sense of humour grows more assured all the time. His writing is just as individual, packed with off-the-wall charm, and every one of the four strips has its own style and atmosphere. This guy is a wild talent, a real one-off. His editorials are also a model for other faneds; concise, intelligent and raising interesting points without labouring them. £3.50 inc p & p. Not cheap, but you get what you pay for. Write to: **M. Brown, 6 Elliott St., The Hoe, Plymouth, PL1 2PP.**

### DRAGON PRESS ISSUE 1,

Nov/Dec 95, is a new bimonthly comic/fanzine from brothers Francis and Simon Yip. 32 A5 pages are packed with 2 dojinshi, 7 reviews, 3 full page plates plus other fan art, a



beginners' guide to garage-kit building and the delightful "SD Origami Corner". A number of new fanzine contributors are on the masthead, and this gives the zine a different 'feel' to the more established UK fanzines where the same names crop up in almost every title. The production is fairly sloppy, with one spread collated out of sequence and an article copied in longhand, but the enthusiasm of the young team is obvious and as they get more experience under their belts, they'll improve in technical terms. Star of the show apart from SD Origami Corner is Iain McClumpha's strip SCHOOLGIRL ATTACK SQUAD ANGEL HEART. Write to: **Francis Yip, 94 Wingfield Close, Shrewsbury, SY1 4BJ, UK**



# MIND BREAK



Test your anime, manga and live-action knowledge on our range of brainteasers. New fans should be OK with our NEO-OTAKU questions, based on material widely available in the UK and USA; those who know their anime, manga and sfx really well can try out the higher levels.

## NEO-OTAKU

1. Who created GIANT ROBO?
2. How many episodes are there in BABEL II?
3. Name the writer of the GHOST IN THE SHELL manga
4. Name the heroine of 3 x 3 EYES

## OTAKU

1. Who wrote the music for TENKU NO SHIRO LAPUTA?
2. Which novel inspired the film SF SHINSEIKI LENS-MAN?
3. What number was the last manga volume of DRAGONBALL Z?
4. Name Compiler and Assembler's two male foes from their own dimension.

## SUPER-OTAKU

1. What is strange about the highschool teacher Ganbachi-san?

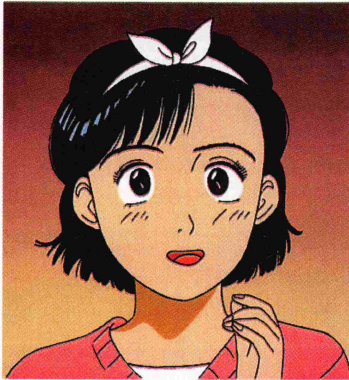
2. Which fashion illustrator became a manga artist and musician?

3. What is the Japanese title of the film released in the USA as NEO-TOKYO?

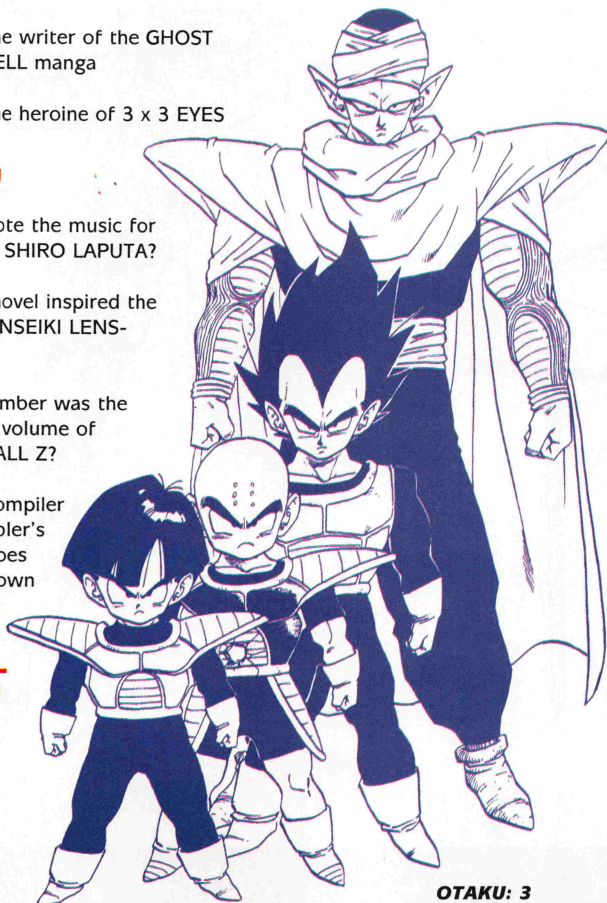
4. Name the artist of the manga YAWARA! A FASHIONABLE JUDO GIRL



NEO-OTAKU: 4



SUPER OTAKU: 4



OTAKU: 3

## LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS

How many did you get right?

### NEO-OTAKU :

1. PROJECT A-KO 3 : CINDERELLA RHAPSODY. This was a trick question because the first title, PROJECT A-KO, was a theatrical film.
2. The Genom Trophy
3. Satoshi Saga
4. Vega

### OTAKU :

1. 228 - 23 in the first series, 155 in the second, 50 in the third.

2. Hiroshi Negishi
3. The part-lobster monster adversary of Ultraman
4. FUTURE BOY CONAN

### SUPER-OTAKU :

1. Go Nagai
2. AI AMANO : I'LL COMFORT YOU
3. Hiroshi Hayashi
4. Mutsumi Inomata



**PLEASE NOTE :** It takes two or three months to put each issue together so your pen pal request may not appear for some time after you send it to us. Please be patient - all pen pal requests received are printed as soon as possible!

### MARK McCARTNEY.

24 Fleetwood Road North, Thornton Cleveleys, Lancs, FY5 4AD, England : "Hi, I'm 16, seeking Japanese penapls, male or female, around my age. I like computers and John Woo films. Fave manga AKIRA, DIRTY PAIR and STRIKER, fave anime DOMINION and AKIRA. I'd like to know more about GUN SMITH CATS!"

### ALISHA EMA.

1 Jalan 5/21, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor D. Ehsan, West Malaysia, Malaysia : "I'm 16, a HUGE fan of GATCHAMAN/ BATTLE OF THE PLANETS/ G-FORCE, love studying and writing about the series. Anybody out there who's as crazy as me about the series, and can tell me more (like exactly how much was cut from each episode!) please write me! I'll be glad to answer!"

### NEIL HANSFORD.

22 Lime Grove, Paulsgrove, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO6 4DG, UK : "I'd like to write to anyone interested in FAN PRODUCTIONS (like fan manga, fan

dubbing and music videos), SHOJO ANIME (GREENWOOD, SAILOR MOON, etc) and/or MASQUERADING AT CONVENTIONS. I really enjoy writing to Pen-Friends and hope you'll write to me!"

**DAVID NELSON.** 95 Northway, Maghull, Liverpool, L31 7BQ, UK: "I'm 15 years old, looking for a Pen Pal 14 years old and over (to about 17), male or female, from anywhere (especially Japan, France and Germany). Mainly interested in Masamune Shirow's books, but I like TENCHI MUYO!, MACROSS, 3 x 3 EYES and others too. Please write in English, French or German; I will reply in English. I will try and reply to as many as possible."

**KONRAD MALINOWSKI.** ul. Krolowy Marysienki 21/ m 110, 02-954 Wilanow, Warszawa, Poland: "Hi everybody. I'm 16. I have a cool computer with Pentium processor and I love manga. I want to correspond with everybody who likes these two things. I offer lots of shareware compacts with games, utilities and all other. 100% answers!"

### SERGIO PALUMBO.

Via N. Ronco 39/4, 16149 Genova, Italy : "Aged 26, AFX reader, fave anime includes GUN-DAM, VENUS WARS, and more; I want to correspond with English or Scottish guys interested in SF, fantasy, anime and manga."

# PEN PALS

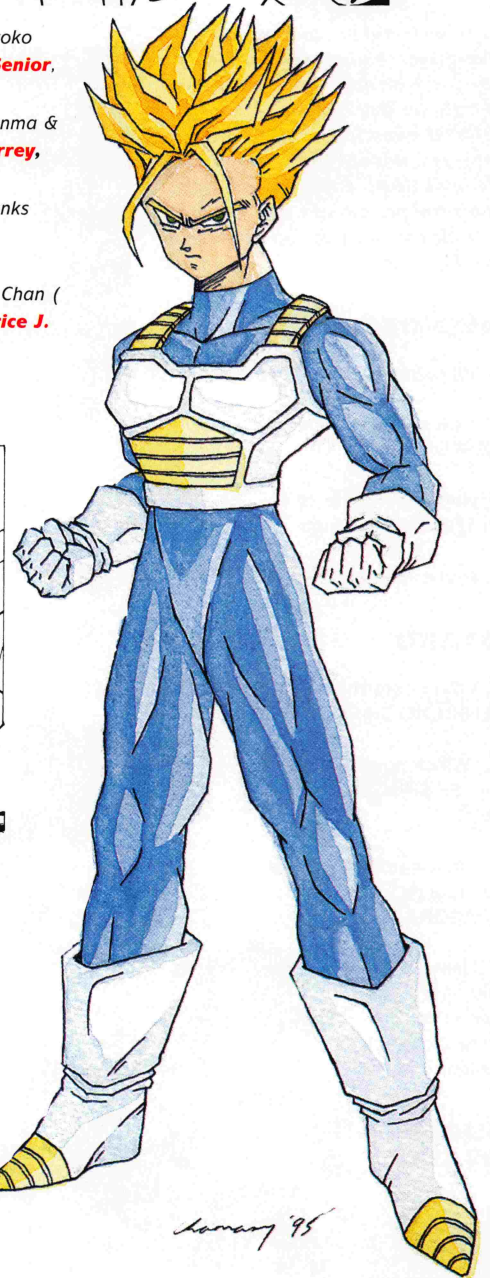


Left: Ayeka, Tenchi, & Ryoko (Tenchi Muyo) by **Alan Senior**, Renfrew, UK.

Above: Chun Li - style Ranma & P-Chan by **Natasha Murrey**, London UK.

Right: Super Sayajin Trunks (Dragonball Z) by **Jean Chamary**, Devon UK

Below left: Lum and Ten Chan (Urusei Yatsura) by **Maurice J. Harding**, Hull UK.



195  
J  
Harding

January '95





Above: 'Untitled' by **Robert Van der Veeke**, Maassluis, Holland  
 Top Right: Samurai Mafia by **Shaheen Mearja**, Khitan, Kuwait.  
 (Something weird happened to this scan last time, so here it is again with apologies to Shaheen!)  
 Right: " Lum's response" by **Matthew Webber**, Colliers Wood UK.  
 (Matthew says - "Phil Laskey's picture of Benten (AFX #7) had me in stitches, particularly when I paid attention to the poster on the wall behind her. I just had to come up with Lum's response")



**IMPORTANT**  
 Please ensure you write your name and address on the back of your artwork and also the name of the characters/show depicted - If the characters are your own creations let us know their names too or they'll have to be labeled 'Untitled'. Just a reminder not to send artwork larger than A4 ( 297 x 210mm)





\* Ah Delicious

# NE-CHAN'S NIBBLES



1

Cream softened butter and sugar together. Mix in the flour to make a firm dough. Roll this into a fat sausage about one and a half inches thick and pop into the fridge for an hour.

**INGREDIENTS**

- 225g Butter
- 125g Caster Sugar
- 325g Plain White Flour
- 60 Mouse Gems (Jelly Sweets) in different colours



2

Roll this into a fat sausage about one and a half inches thick and pop into the fridge for an hour.



3

Use a sharp knife to cut into slices about half an inch thick.

4

Place on a greased baking sheet and decorate each biscuit with three MouseGems.



5

Bake in a moderate oven, 350F, 180C, Gas 4, for about 25-30 minutes until golden. Cool on wire racks. Makes about 20.

Artwork: Andy Hepworth



## DOMINION TANK POLICE

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Feeble Excuses Dept: To commemorate the recent finish of the second DOMINION series released by Manga Video, we decided to take a nostalgic look back at a couple of classic images from the original ... Besides, we were getting nasty dents in our foreheads from the barrels of the Puma Twins' guns!



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